

Union Base Ball Club of Dexter

Member Handbook

Updated: July 22, 2018

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	2
Club History	2
Uniform	2
Player Expectations	3
Game Strategy	5
Rules (with explanations)	6
Continuing Education	10

Mission Statement

Our mission is to play base ball with an emphasis on history and sportsmanship. We are presenting the history of base ball as it was played in the early 1860's when it started gaining national attention. We will always try to present the history as accurately as we can. Part of being historically accurate is playing the game as a gentlemen's game.

This is not just another base ball team to be used as an outlet for competition or to be treated like a 'beer league' softball team. We have a specific purpose and if you are part of the team, you understand what that is and want to be part of it.

Brief History of Our Club

Our club was started in the fall of 2011 with the plan of playing our first matches in the spring of 2012. Donovan first heard about vintage base ball after seeing in the Dexter newspaper that the Monitor Base Ball Club of Chelsea had just played a game at Gordon Hall in Dexter as part of 'Civil War Days.' In the article it mentioned that they were looking to players and had interest in starting a club in Dexter. Donovan contact the captain of the Chelsea club 'Honest' Jon Van Hoek about playing and a couple weeks later Donovan went out and practiced with Chelsea.

At the end of that season for Chelsea, Jon asked Donovan if he would be interested in starting a club in Dexter with his help. A couple weeks later the two would get together and lay the foundation for what would become the Union Base Ball Club of Dexter. Jon would provide the experience and knowledge needed to start the club, then Donovan would take over and run the day to day activity. Jon and Donovan first approached the Dexter Area Historical Society about supporting the club, knowing that historic base ball was the kind of activity that worked well with the historical society. The Historical Society offered the use of land in front of Gordon Hall for our matches and provided a great setting for our matches that first year. Due to a rough playing field and concern for injuries, the second year we were able to play our matches at St. Joseph Catholic Church and that is where we have played ever since.

Uniform

The uniform is made up of six parts. 1) cap, 2) gray long sleeve button shirt, 3) shield, 4) full length pants, 5) All black cleats.

You are to wear your entire uniform at all times. You only buy the shield (with buttons) and cap from the club, the rest is your responsibility to acquire. You cannot wear sunglasses, modern jewelry, wristwatches, eye black or batting gloves. The general thought that applies to the entire uniform is that it cannot have anything that appears modern. That means no modern

logos and no modern fabric. Everything we wear needs to be as close as possible to what they would have worn at the time. Keep that in mind as you purchase shirt/pants.

Gray long sleeve button shirt w/ Shield

Your shirt must be a long sleeve button up shirt. It also needs to be long sleeve with a collar. It needs to be in the gray family, preferably on the darker end of the scale. It should NOT be close to white, it needs to be obviously gray. Sleeves can be worn down or rolled up, your preference. The link below is where I purchased my gray shirt, I think it is reasonable priced. I did remove the pockets on my shirt to give it a cleaner look. I purchased the 'GY- Grey' Color. My personal preference is to get a 'long' or 'tall' shirt so that it stays tucked in while we run around, but that is up to you.

https://www.automotiveworkwear.com/RedKap/SP14/mens-work-shirts.html?v=9661&gclid=EAlaQobChMIgPL7wruU1gIVhluGCh2MMgsfEAQYAiABEgLY9fD_BwE

You are provided your shield with buttons as part of your uniform costs. You are to wear your shield at all times using the buttons provided. You are NOT to attach your shield with velco/pins or directly sewing the shield onto your shirt. The shield should be able to be 'unbuttoned' and removed.

Undershirt

If you wear a shirt underneath your uniform, it needs to be white, gray or royal blue.

Belt/ Support

Wearing a belt and what belt you wear is your decision, it is not provided. It cannot have visible logos and should be black. Avoid rubber baseball belts or anything that appears modern. You may also wear suspenders if you want. If you wear suspenders they should be gray, white or royal blue. As always, no visible logos, no modern material.

Pants

Your pants need to be navy blue or black. They CANNOT be sweat pants or other modern/ performance material. Also, keep in mind that denim jeans were not made until the 1870's, so avoid denim. When choosing pants, avoid skinny or tight pants. They should not have any visible logos or stripes. I recommend a pair of Dickies brand pants, they hold up well and look appropriate. As an idea of where to start, I wear the Dickies '874 work pant'.

Cleats

The cleats can be metal or plastic, your choice. There are clubs and locations that do not allow metal cleats, so my recommendation is to wear plastic cleats. All modern logos need to be covered in black so that it appears you are wearing all black cleats.

Player Expectations

Basics

- Focus on having fun, this isn't about competition
- Absolutely NO SWEARING. We want our games to be family friendly.
- No spitting

Positive Attitude

Not everyone we come across is going to be playing for the love of the game like we are. We are going to come across other players that are more worried about winning than having fun or maybe are having a bad day and we can't let their attitude change how we approach the game. This also means that if there is a questionable call by another player or an umpire, we do not argue about it or make a scene. If you truly believe they are wrong, you get the captains involved and they will talk about it. We will not call out weaker players on the other team as 'easy outs' or single them out. When we make a mistake on offense or defense, we won't dwell on it or make a scene, just get up and prepare for the next one.

Equipment

We will not loan out club equipment. All the bats, balls, etc are expensive and risk being broken or damaged if loaned out.

Membership Dues

Membership dues will be paid fully and on time.

Practice

Practices are scheduled each year as voted upon by the members. The top two days that are voted for are alternated each week. There are no requirements to attend practices, but it is asked that you attend every other week or at the very least every third week. Attending practices allow us to get familiar with each other and learn how to play as a team. It also allows us to talk about previous or upcoming events. It is highly encouraged to attend as many practices as possible. There are no repercussions for missing practice except for one. If during

a game someone has to sit an extra inning, it will be someone who missed the previous practice.

Team Activities

We will often participate in Parades and other community events. Your participation is greatly encouraged. Having four or five people show up for a parade is nothing special, but when we can get 13 or 14 people, then people will take notice. In the future we will be trying to participate in community events where we can set up a booth and I would rely on you guys to help out and man those activities.

Spectator Interactions

It is expected that during a match, you will walk and talk to our spectators to answer any questions they have or just to interact. It always enhances our matches when we can get more people out there and we can make it more enjoyable for those that do if we explain what is going on. If you want to show someone a ball or bat, that is fine, but make sure you get it back before leaving them.

No Soliciting

Many of us obviously work full time and our jobs are going to come up in conversation. All I ask is that you don't solicit your business to the other players. I don't want anyone looking at the club as an opportunity to further their business. As I mentioned, if it comes up in conversation and you are asked to lend your business experience to a fellow member, that is fine.

Meals

A responsibility that comes with being part of the club is that you must participate in the after match meals that we host at our home games. Everyone contributes equally by bringing main dishes and side dishes. You must sign up for the specified amount of main dishes and side dishes before the season starts. If you need to switch a date that you have signed up for, it is your responsibility to find someone to switch with, then let me know.

You are responsible for making sure that when you bring food for a match it is in the pavilion before the match starts. There are plugs available for anything that needs to stay warm.

Meal Setup

In an attempt to streamline the after match meal process, we are going to take turns setting up the meal for our home games. Anyone and everyone who is not playing defense in the 8th inning will make their way over to the pavilion and set up the tables and food. This will

mean sometimes we will have one person setting up and sometimes four people. You will be responsible for setting up food, forks/spoons, etc. You are to make sure that after the game when players walk over to the pavilion, everything is ready to go.

Field Setup

As we continue to improve our match experience for our spectators, it will take longer for the field set up before those matches. As a result, I would like everyone to help out throughout the year and show up two hours before the match and help set up.

Pre-game

Plan on always showing up at least an hour before the match is scheduled to start. This goes for both home and away games. Showing up at least an hour early allows you time to warm up and stretch before the game starts. I also keeps the game from being delayed waiting for someone to show up.

Attendance Change

If you have indicated that you will NOT be attending a match and you have decided you want to play, I need 24 hours notice to the beginning of the match. If you have indicated that you will be playing and your status changes and you no longer can, I need at least 3 hours notice to the beginning of the match.

Game Strategy

On every hit, you should be in action. If the ball is not coming to you, then you should be moving to cover a base, to provide a cut off or backing up a base.

The catcher has one job, to keep the ball from getting passed him. The appropriate place for the catcher is a point behind the plate that allows the catcher to comfortably catch the ball after only one bound. The catcher does not need to crouch as a modern catcher would, be in a position that allows for quick movement to catch foul balls.

Hit the ball hard and low, the longer the ball is in the air, the easier it is for the fielders to get to it for an out. If you need something to aim at, aim at the infielders feet.

Keep 'fair/foul' hits to a minimum, a couple per game. Although it is a legal, it comes across as a cheap shot and is generally frowned upon. Other clubs will utilize the hit and some will do it often, but we don't sink to their levels.

Look for the easy out. Throwing to first base isn't always the easiest out, know before each play where you want to throw the ball if you get it.

When you are a base runner, always pay attention to where the ball is. If you are certain that a fly ball cannot be caught on the fly, start running.

When you field a ball in the outfield, do not hold onto it. As soon as possible, throw it into a base/ cut off man or the pitcher. The longer the ball stays in the outfield the more the base runners will try to advance.

Rules (with explanation)

General

- Matches will be played by the 'Bound Rule.' Only the ground counts as the bound. Balls coming to a rest in trees, canopies or other structures will not count as an out.
Balls hitting trees or other obstacles do not count as a bound, only the ball touching the ground counts as the bound. You can play the ball on the fly off tents or trees for a fly out if it has not touched the ground yet. If the ball comes to a stop or is stuck before you grab it, it does not count as an out. If it come to a rest in fair territory, treat it as a live ball and play it.
- All bases are in fair territory, including home plate.
If a struck ball touches any base it is a fair ball. Mostly will happen with home plate, which is often thought as being foul.
- Slow pitching with an emphasis on putting the ball where the striker wants it. Trying to make the game about hitting and fielding.
We are not trying to strike anyone out, or win a game with pitching. We want to deliver a hittable ball and rely on our fielders to make a play and get the striker/running out.
- When you are called upon to make a determination on a play that you are involved in, you are expected to be honest without regard to how it will affect the outcome of the game.
If you make a last second grab as the ball is headed for the ground for an out, or if you make it to a base right before the ball arrives, you are expected to always be honest when calling the play like you see it. You

won't always be asked to call the play, but if you are, you must always be honest.

Equipment/ Accessories

- No bats that have a modern appearance. Avoid two tone or fully painted bats. Wood grain should be the prominent look of the bat, with stripes or blocks of paint an option. Thin handles compared to big barrels were not normal at the time and are discouraged.

Pretty straight forward, don't buy a modern bat and show up expecting to use it in a game. The ONLY modern bats that will be allowed at our home games are completely wood bats with no paint on them and any modern logos sanded off. The club will provide bats at all games for everyone to use. You can purchase your own vintage bat at one of the many suppliers.
- We discourage the use of sunglasses, but understand with eye sensitivities and transition lens, it may not be possible to avoid.

Sunglasses were not worn in the 1860's unless you had Syphilis (so i've heard), so sunglasses should not be worn during any of our games. I understand there are circumstances where it cannot be avoided, but you need to talk to me if this is going to be an issue.
- No eye black, No batting gloves, No fielding gloves, No wristwatches, No modern jewelry

This is simply all part of looking era appropriate. Eye black and batting gloves were not used at the time. Watches/ jewelry would have been removed, so please keep with the era that we are portraying.

Base Running

- No overrunning first base

Very simple, if you overrun first base, you can be tagged out. Start slowing down early so you don't overrun the base.
- No Sliding

No head first or feet first sliding running from one base to the next. This is for your safety and an often discussed rule of the 1860's. Many fields we play on are uneven or rocky, so it would be dangerous to be sliding. No sliding is also a basis of vintage base ball as we play it. If you are caught off base or in a pickle and have to 'lunge' with an outstretched hand to tag a base, that is permitted. Lunging should be from a stand still or very low speed as to not be considered sliding.
- Stealing is allowed only on a muff by the behind (2nd bound)

There is no modern 'stealing' in our games, but you may advance at your own risk if the ball is 'muffed' by the catcher. A 'muff' is considered when the ball bounces twice before landing in the catcher's hands. Although advancing on the second bounce is permitted, I recommend only 'stealing' when the ball gets by the catcher. If a catcher grabs a ball cleanly even after two bounds, he still has ample time to make the throw to the base to get you out.

- Base runners can advance on the bound, must tag up on a caught fly ball
When playing a 'bound rule' game like we do in our home games, you can advance to the next base WITHOUT having to tag up if the ball is caught on the bound. As with the modern game, if the ball is caught on the fly, you must tag up before advancing to the next base. If you are a base runner and know for certain that the fielders cannot catch the ball on the fly, feel free to advance.
- A 'gentlemen' two stride lead off
You can take two steps/stridings off the base while waiting for the pitcher to deliver a ball to the batter. Be aware that you can be picked off, so pay attention to your surroundings. If the pitcher attempts to pick you off, you must return to the base you are leaving from.
- A base runner WILL NOT be put out if hit by a ball by accident. If the base runner puts themselves in front of the ball or interferes with a play, they are out.
If you are running from one base to the next and get hit with a struck ball AND it was unavoidable, play will continue as though it didn't happen. If you purposely stop and put yourself in front of the ball, the base runner will be out.
- The runner is out if the base tender touches the base or runner with any part of his person while in control of the ball.
A fielder with ball in hand can touch you or the base with any part of his body for an out. If he is holding the ball in his left hand and touches you with his right hand, you are still out.
- If a ball is knocked out of a base tenders hand while in control, in the process of making an out, the out is recorded.
If as a result of tagging a runner for an out the ball get knocked loose, the out is still recorded. Contact must only be made for a moment for it to count.
- No free returns. If a foul ball is hit, you must return to your base and can be put out if the ball is sent to the bag before you get there after going through the pitcher at the pitcher's point.
If you are running the bases and the batter hits a foul ball, you cannot take

your time returning to your base. If the defense gets the foul ball and throws it to the pitcher on the 'mound' and the pitcher throws it to the base you are returning to before you get there, you are out. If you have advanced more than one base on a foul ball, you must touch each base in reverse order as you return to where you started. The short story is that you must hustle back on a foul ball, never be caught off a base.

- If a fair ball is touched by a spectator or lost/stuck in tree or other obstacle, the base runners must stop at the base they are currently advancing to. The ball must go through the pitcher at the pitcher's point before the ball is in play.
This falls into the 'gentlemen rules' and not taking advantage of an unfortunate circumstance. If you are running and the ball is interfered with or unreachable, stop at the next base you are running to.
- A late call or insufficiently called foul ball by the umpire will allow all base runners to return to the base they left without fear of being put out.
This is just about being fair. If the umpire calls a very late foul ball or does not say it loud enough that everyone in the field can hear it, then all base runners can return to the base they left without having to worry about the defense attempting to get them out.

Fielding

- Fair/ Foul is determined by where the ball first hits the ground
If a struck ball hits in fair territory and immediately goes foul, it is still a fair ball. The fair/foul determination is made by the spot the ball first hits after coming off the bat.
- If an innings third out is recorded by a force out, no runs will be counted scoring from third. If a runner scores before the third out is recorded by tag out, the run will count.
If there is a runner on third and they cross home plate, it DOES NOT count if the final out of the inning is recorded by a force out at any base. If a runner crosses home plate BEFORE the final out of an inning is recorded by tagging a runner at any base, then the run will count.
- If a struck ball hits the striker (or an extension of the striker, like a bat) by accident, the play will continue as though it hadn't happened. An accidental second hit by the bat while following through will not affect the progress of the match.
The most common instance of this happening is a batter hitting a ball straight down at the first base line and as they proceed to run to first they make contact with the ball. As long as the contact was accidental, the play will continue. If the runner purposely kicks the ball or alters the path

of the ball, they will be out. This also counts if the batter 'double hits' the ball by accident.

- Only the ground counts as the ground, bounds off of bodies or objects do not count as a bound.

As mentioned earlier, only the ground counts as a bound. So you can play a ball off of trees or other obstacles. In addition to that, if you try to catch a fly ball and make contact with the ball but DO NOT catch it, you can still grab it after one bound on the ground for an out. This is because although it touched your body/hands, your body doesn't count as a bound. So as long as after hitting your hands, it only touches the ground once, you can still grab it for a bound out.

Continued Education

Recommended Reading

Baseballs' first inning: A history of the national pastime through the civil war
By William J Ryczek

Base Ball Founders: The clubs, players and cities of the northeast that established the game
By Peter Morris, William J Ryczek, Jan Finkel, Leonard Levin, Richard Malatzky

Base Ball Pioneers, 1850 - 1870: The clubs and players who spread the sport nationwide
By Peter Morris, William J Ryczek, Jan Finkel, Leonard Levin, Richard Malatzky

Base Ball Fever: Early baseball in michigan
By Peter Morris