

BASEBALL BY POSITION

Illustrated by Chuck Whelon

In most leagues, a baseball team consists of nine players. The main defensive positions are classified as outfielders (left, center, and right), infielders (first base, second base, shortstop, and third base), a pitcher, and a catcher. When a team is on offense, or at bat, each position player bats. In the American League of Major League Baseball, a designated hitter bats for the pitcher, who is usually not a strong hitter.



Second Base



Third Base



Mound

Foul line



Home Plate

Batter's box



Catcher

From their position behind home plate, catchers can see the game unfold before their eyes. Catchers are responsible for "calling" pitches (instructing the pitcher which type of pitch to throw). A strong arm is important as he or she must try to throw out runners trying to steal second or third base.



Pitcher

Most eyes are on the pitchers during a baseball game. He or she pitches from the mound, which is 60 feet 6 inches from home plate. Common pitches are fastballs, curveballs, changeups, and knuckleballs.

Outfielders

Speed and agility are important characteristics of an outfielder. An outfielder must try to run down balls hit in the air and catch them before they hit the ground, or get to balls quickly that do fall in for hits. A strong, accurate arm is also important so he or she can get the ball back into the infield.

Infielders

Having quick hands and feet helps infielders field the many ground balls that they will see in the infield. The strongest fielder is usually put at shortstop, as that is where a majority of balls are hit.

First Base

Base line

Coach's box

Dugout

On deck circle