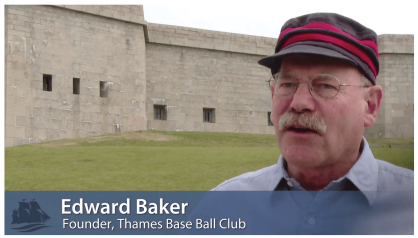
Exceptions

We try to play an authentic version of base ball but there are some exceptions that we allow.

- The rules of 1861 through 1865 state that no substitutions are allowed except in case of illness or injury, but we allow them.
- Pinch runners are allowed for players unable to run or wishing to avoid running in order to prevent further injury – the first available batter in the batting order who is not on base is used as the pinch runner.
- If the two teams agree, additional players beyond the nine playing the field can be included in the batting order in order to increase participation and encourage more players to attend games.
- If there is no umpire available, the team at bat will provide a player to act as umpire.
- If one team is short-handed and the other has more than 9 players then they can "loan" their extra players to the other team.
- If both teams have only 8 players then the team at bat will provide a catcher for the fielding team – in some cases we will also agree to prohibit base stealing.
- We use a backstop to minimize the number of base balls that end up in the Thames River since they cost $16 each. It is unclear if backstops were used or even allowed.
- If both teams agree before the game starts, a baserunner is limited to a one-step lead off the base and must wait for the pitcher to release the ball before attempting to steal a base or advancing on a hit ball.
- We don't secure our bases. If the base moves, it remains safe haven for the runner.
- We wear black modern rubber cleats with non-black design elements blacked out.



Thames Base Ball Club

New London, CT

About Us

- The Thames Base Ball Club is a non-profit vintage base ball team. Our goal is to promote and preserve the game of base ball as it was played in the mid-19th century and have fun while doing so.
- Our team was formed in 2005. Edward Baker, a former member of the Mystic Oceanics team that folded in 2004. He had just become the Executive Director of the New London County Historical Society, and decided to form a new team.
- Our home field is located at historic Fort Trumbull in New London, CT.
- The Woodstock Hilltoppers, Wethersfield Red Onion, and Lisbon Tunnelmen are our regular opponents. We occasionally play teams from Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New York, and Maine.
- We are available during games to answer any questions from the fans about the differences between the game we as we play it and the modern game of baseball.
- We are a member of the Vintage Base Ball Association (VBBA).
- Some team members belong to the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR).
- If you would like us to play at your event, send us an email and let us know the date of the event, the dimensions of your field, and whether you can put together a team to serve as our opponent or if you would rather that we try to find another vintage team to play.
- If you are interested in joining our team, send us an email. While we don't currently have any women on our team, we have had some in the past and welcome any who would like to join us.

Web: https://www.thamesbbc.org
Email: thamesbbc@gmail.com



Thames Base Ball Club

New London, CT
Founded in 2005

Base Ball by the rules of 1861, 1864, and 1865

Thames Base Ball Club
New London, CT

Differences From The Modern Game

We play most of our matches using the rules of 1864 but occasionally we play using the rules of 1861 or 1865 (as defined in the Beadle's Dime Base-Ball Player guides). Below are the differences in the rules from the modern game. All apply to 1861 rules except where noted as applying to 1864 or 1865 rules.

Equipment

- No gloves!
- No catcher's mask, chest protector, or shin guards.
- Ball is 9.5 inches in circumference, 5.5 ounces in weight, and is made from a single piece of leather (a modern baseball is between 5 and 5.25 ounces, 9 to 9.25 inches in circumference and is made from two symmetrical pieces of leather).
- Bat can be no more than 2.5″ in diameter but there is no restriction on the length or size of the handle (we avoid using modern bats that have a thin handle even though there is no rule against them because they weren't in use back then).

Field

- Home base is iron, circular, white, and between 9″ and 13″ in circumference.
- The batters line is a line drawn through the center of the home base, not exceeding in length three feet from either side thereof, and parallel with the line occupied by the pitcher.
- Pitcher's "hurl" from behind a line 45 feet from home plate, 12 feet wide with an iron plate marking the Pitcher's Point in the center of that line.
- ***1865*** – A second line 48 feet from home plate defines the back of the pitcher's location.
- Bases are canvas squares.
- Foul lines from home to 1st base and home to 3rd base.

Pitching

- Ball is "hurled" underhand (not jerked or thrown), and must be released at the waist or below.
- No foot over the pitcher's line during the pitch.
- Whenever the pitcher draws back his hand, or moves with the apparent purpose or pretension to deliver the ball, he must deliver it.
- ***1864 & 1865*** – Both of the pitchers feet must be on the ground at delivery of pitch.
- Violation of any of these rules shall be declared a baulk and all base runners will advance one base.

Umpiring

- The umpire's primary job is calling struck balls foul (no call for fair balls), calling strikes, calling baulks, tracking the score, declaring the winner.
- The umpire warns the batter once for not swinging at a good pitch before he starts calling strikes – 3 strikes is an out (foul balls are not strikes).
- Balls are not called so there are no walks.
- ***1864 & 1865*** – Umpire warns pitcher once for a bad pitch before he starts calling balls – 3 balls is a walk.
- The umpire will only make a call on a play if there is a dispute between the players.

Batting

- Choice of innings is determined by the team captains.
- The first batter at the start of an inning is the batter following the last player put out in the previous inning (not the player who follows the last batter from the previous inning).
- The batter must stand "on" the batters line (the meaning of this rule is not clear as to whether the batter must have one foot on the line or if they can be astride the line with one foot on either side of it – we use the latter interpretation).
- A ball thrown between batters shoulders and 6″ off the ground and within reach with the bat is considered a good pitch for the batter to swing at.
- A struck ball is fair once it hits the ground or player in fair territory (ball does not need to stay in fair territory past 1st or 3rd base to be fair).
- If the batter swings and misses for a third strike and the catcher does not catch the ball (either before it touches the ground or on the first bound), the batter must run to first base whether first base is occupied or not, regardless of the number of outs at the time.
- Bunting is not allowed.
- A full swing attempt to hit the ball into fair territory in a direction towards foul territory ("a fair foul hit") is allowed.
- There is no "hit by pitch" rule.
- If a pitched ball that the batter does not swing at hits the bat it is a dead ball.
- No timeouts between pitches.

Fielding

- Catching the ball on the first bound is an out (this includes foul tips that are caught by the catcher on the first bound and muffed fly catches that are caught on the first bound).
- ***1865*** – Fair balls must be caught in the air to make an out – Foul balls can be caught on the first bound.
- The fielder must avoid obstructing the baserunner when possible.
- The fielder can not set up in front of the base while taking a throw if it obstructs the baserunner.
- A ball picked up in fair territory by a spectator must be returned to the pitcher before a play can be made on a baserunner (similar to making a play after a foul ball explained below – this rule can come into play on our home field because there is a walking path that crosses through our outfield).
- The fielder does not need to retain control of the ball after making a tag or a catch (the umpire makes the determination if the tag or catch was made).
- There is no infield fly rule.

Running the Bases

- Baserunner who leaves his base on a foul ball can be put out if they don't get back to the base before the ball but the ball must go to the pitcher first before a play can be made on the baserunner.
- No overrunning first base on a hit or you can be tagged out.
- Baserunner who believes that the ball is going to be caught on the bound does not have to wait before running (i.e. no tagging up required on bound outs).
- If at the start of an at-bat there is a baserunner on 1st base, or 1st and 2nd base, or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base, then the force out rule applies (i.e. touching the base that a baserunner must advance to puts them out – no tag of the baserunner is required).
- Whether or not the force out rule stays in effect a trailing baserunner is put out is not clear in the rules until 1864. We use the interpretation that the force rule is still used in that situation in our 1861 games (ex: if the batter is put out at 1st base the other baserunners can still be put out by touching the base that they are advancing to – no tag of the baserunner is required).
- ***1864 & 1865*** – The force out no longer applies if a baserunner behind them is put out before they are (i.e. if the batter is first put out at 1st base the other baserunners must now be tagged to get them out).
- A baserunner running more than 3 feet out of the line between bases in order to avoid a tag is out.
- A baserunner accidentally struck by a batted ball is not out – the umpire will determine if the baserunner intentionally allowed himself to be hit by the ball.

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