

GAMEPLAN BASEBALL

Your chance to manage a Major League Ballclub



Gameplan Baseball is a simulation of Major League Baseball. You are the manager of a Major League ball-club, taking your team through a 162 game regular season. If you're good enough and qualify for the playoffs you continue and try to reach and win the World Series.

In Gameplan Baseball we try to make the game work the same way as in real life, with realistic decisions to be made about team management. Sometimes you'll have to make tough decisions, whether to sign better pitchers or hitters, or develop your stadium and income sources to improve your future finances.

In addition to the decisions about signing and cutting players you've also got to shuffle your lineup from game to game. You've injuries to contend with, as well as players losing form. You decide which pitchers will be in your starting rotation and which will operate from the "bullpen". You decide when to rest your star hitters, and who to use as pinch hitters and when to use them.

Gameplan Baseball is a management game, designed and run by Danny McConnell in the UK, and has been running for over ten years. You play it by email or by post – you send in your instructions to us for each set of games, we run it through our computers and send the reports and results back to you. It's the ultimate competition – you're playing in a league full of real-life opponents.

The Game

Your objective is to win the World Series against teams run by other players drawn from all over the country (and around the world). Each game is structured just like real life, divided into the AL and the NL, each with three divisions.

During each round of games you play three three-game series. You have to make a mixture of decisions: both "playing" decisions and "management" decisions as both are equally important for a Baseball manager.

Your Team

Each team has an "active" roster (players available for selection each game) of twenty-five players, three-fifths of whom are usually hitters and the remainder pitchers. In addition you've got a number of minor league players, who can be called up to your active squad at any time.

Players and Skills

Each hitter and pitcher is rated according to four skills. For hitters they are Hitting, Power, Speed and Fielding. For pitchers they are Accuracy, Control, Quickness and Stamina. Each skill has a different effect on the player's abilities and performances. The better a player's skills are the more effective he will be, but the higher his wage demands will be. Gameplan Baseball is as much about financial management as coaching - you can't build a "superteam" because you've only got limited finances, so the key to success is getting the best value for money out of your roster.

Setting the Lineup

Each turn you have to decide who'll start in the batting lineup, and who to use as pinch hitters, or in platoons (specialists who come in when you face a left handed pitcher). You've also got to decide on the batting order. Most hitters need some rest during the season, otherwise they'll be less effective during the playoffs (assuming you qualify for them) so you've also got to try and rest them as you go along, without sacrificing your playoff chances.

Pitchers – The Starting Rotation and the Bullpen

You've also got to decide on your starting rotation for pitchers (teams normally have four or five starters, who pitch every fourth or fifth day), and who to use in the bullpen (the pitchers who come off the bench to finish a game when and if the starter's too tired to continue, or has been hit out of the game). For each pitcher you'll decide when to take him out of the game and the situations in which you'll bring in particular bullpen pitchers. There is quite an art to managing your pitching rotation and bullpen from day to day.

Minor Leagues, Financial Management

You also have to make decisions about sending players to the minor leagues, either to turn their form around, or younger players you wish to develop. You've also got to deal with player injuries, contract disputes and so on as well as investing finances in merchandising, improving stadium facilities, all of which reduce your short-term funds but increase your income in the longer term.

Signing Free Agents and Making Trades

In addition to the “game-day” decisions you’ve also got to make roster and financial decisions during each turn. You can sign players from the free-agent list, or make trades with other players. Whilst on the free agent list players’ values (and their wages) drop, so you’ll commonly find you’ll need to leave some of your over-priced veterans on the free-agent list and then resign them when their wage demands have dropped to more realistic levels. Other teams may sign them but if you lose a player to another team you do get compensation.

Playoffs

At the end of the regular season the three divisional winners and the best runner-up in each league (known as the wild-card) move forward into the playoffs. The first round is played over the best-of-five games, whilst the League Championship Series and World Series are played over the best-of-seven games. Teams that fail to make the playoffs, or are eliminated during the playoffs take part in consolation competitions or play pre-season games, readying themselves for the following season.

The Draft

During the playoffs each team participates in the college draft, signing new talent to their rosters. These are usually “promising” players packed with potential who’ll need a season or two to mature.

Spring Training

At the start of each new season each player is also assessed for gaining or losing abilities. This is dependent upon a player’s “potential” - a player loses one point of potential each season. A player with lots of potential is likely to gain skills quickly, particularly if his form during the season was good. A player with no potential will start to lose skills.

Either way, players’ wage demands increase as they get older (even if their skills are declining, they still think you should be paying them more) so you have decisions to make about whether a player is continuing to provide value for money.

Game Reports

Each turn you receive a dozen pages of laser-printed reports: a full roster listing with current form, injury details, lineups etc, plus detailed stats for all of your players. You receive full boxscores for all games you played, and outline reports on all games played in your league, free agent signings, trades, injuries and all the news you’ll need from around the league.

All reports are sent either by email or via the post – you can play whichever way you wish.

Extra Reports

You also have the option of receiving extra reports - there are many optional stats listings, you can receive play-by-play listings of your games and so on. For those who really want to see all the stats from their games the option is there if you want it, though the extra listings won’t give you an advantage over other managers (though they may well increase your enjoyment of the game).

Games and Costs

Gameplan Baseball is designed and run in the UK, with over half a dozen games running for over ten years. We have positions available in most of these games that will allow you to start play immediately (as in real life, you take over a team and try to turn their fortunes around). You can even join more than one game if you wish!

Turnfees in Gameplan Baseball are £3.00 for one, £12.00 for four, £27.00 for ten or £48.00 for twenty. There are further discounts available if you play in more than one game.

What is “Play By Mail”

Play By Mail (PBM) is simple. You send in your instructions via an interactive website or by the post to the GM, who works out the results and sends them back. This process allows hundreds of players worldwide to play at the same time, and compete against each other. The results of all games in your league are processed simultaneously, but you get a report individualised to your team. The other players don’t know what you’re planning, and results are dependent upon the decisions that all of the different players make.

How to Join

To join Gameplan Baseball you’ll need to send £5.00 (payable to Ab Initio Games) along with your name and address, which covers the cost of your rulebook, team setup and first two turns. When you send in your application please give a number of team preferences (real life Major League teams, the more choices you give the sooner we can start you playing).

Alternatively go to our website at www.pbmsports.com and you’ll find details about how to register online and pay your startup by credit card. If you still aren’t sure, do an Internet Search for “Gameplan Baseball” and you’ll find plenty of things from existing players saying why they enjoy playing it!

Other Games

We’ve also got a range of Sci-Fi, Historical and Business games as well as many sports strategy and stats games (American Football, Ice Hockey, Basketball, Rugby, Cricket, Soccer). Please ask for more details on any of these.

YES, I’d like to join a game of Gameplan Baseball. I enclose a cheque/postal order for £5.00 (payable to Ab Initio Games).

Team Preferences: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Where did you first hear about Gameplan Baseball?: _____

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