



CUMANN CLUICHE CORR na hÉIREANN

# The Rules of GAA Rounders



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## Introduction

This booklet contains an official copy of the playing rules of Rounders. Its aim is to ensure that all players, spectators and commentators, read and learn the rules and definitions of the terms used in the rules. When spectators are fully conversant with the rules, they will have a better understanding and appreciation of refereeing decisions.

It is important that teachers and coaches ensure that all players have a copy of this booklet and that they study it carefully. This will improve their understanding of the game and help them to accept the decisions of the officials, without dissent.

A thorough knowledge of the rules enables players and teams to become more efficient and successful, and to get greater satisfaction from playing. It is important to remember that the definitions of terms are an integral part of the playing rules. When these definitions are clearly understood by all concerned, we can expect a much higher consistency in decision making by match officials, because each term has only one possible meaning.

This booklet emphasises the importance which the Association places on promoting a better understanding of our games, which are part of our national culture, by presenting the playing rules in a way which is easy to read, remember and apply.

## Playing Rules for Rounders

### Dimensions

1. The field of play shall not be less than 70 metres long by 70 metres wide. There shall be four bases 25 metres apart, and the lay of the ground shall be as shown in diagram 1.

Diagram 1 The letters stand for

a - Foul Lines

e - First Base

b - Pitcher's Stand

f - Second Base

c - Home Base

g - Third Base

d - Catcher's Box

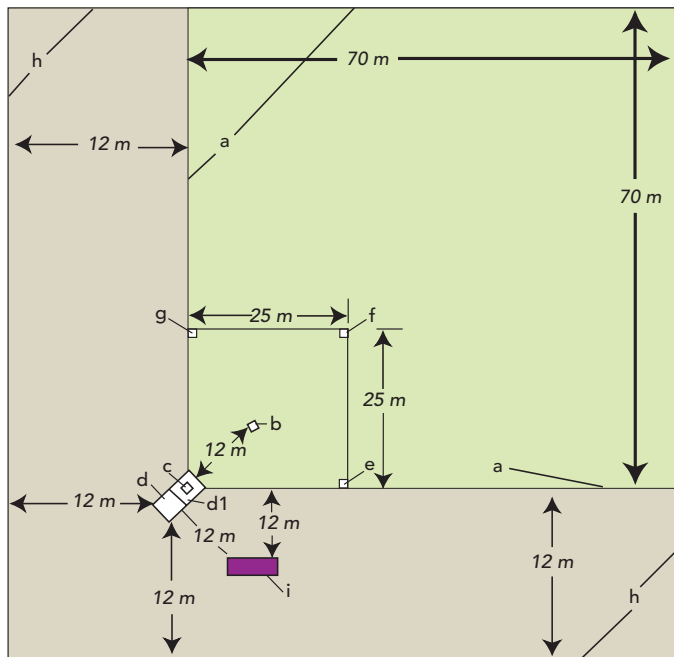
h - Field Boundary

d1 - Batter's Box

i - Batters' Bench

 (foul ground is shaded)

Diagram 1



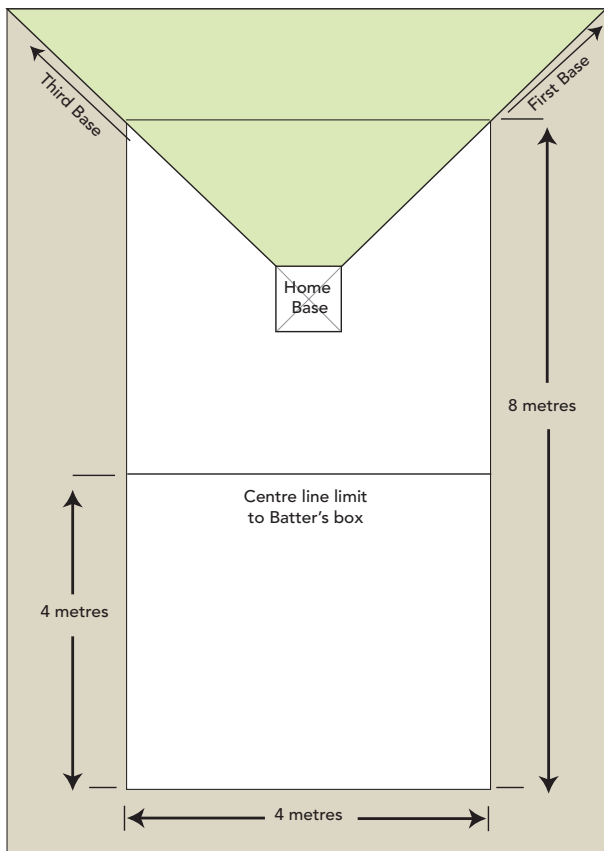
A rectangular box, 4 metres by 8 metres, shall be placed at home base, with the centre of the back line in line with the centres of home base, the pitcher's stand and second base, and six metres away from the centre of Home base. The back corners of the catcher's box will be each 2 metres from the centre of the back line.

A line across the centre of the box will divide it into two equal squares, the section containing home base shall be called the Batter's box, the back section will be the Catcher's box. (See Rule 14).

The side lines of the batter's / catcher's box and the back line will be continuations of the foul lines.

[See Diagram 2]

Diagram 2





2. Home base shall consist of a square of 64 centimetres each side. Its centre will be over the intersection of the base lines. Each of the other bases shall be a square of 64 centimetres each side. Each of 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases shall be contained within the 25 metres square, between the diamond corners, and the base area will be the marking on the ground, not the material temporarily laid for the match.

Diagram 3

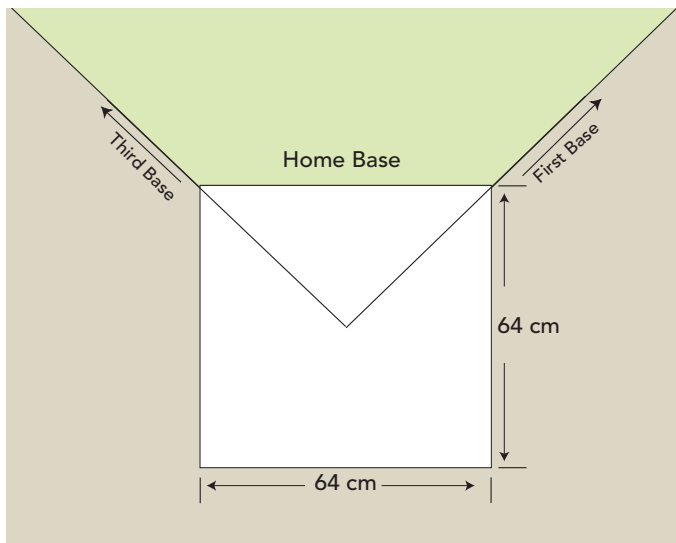


Diagram 3A

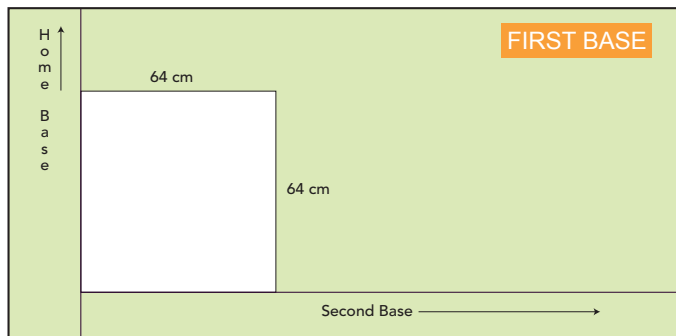
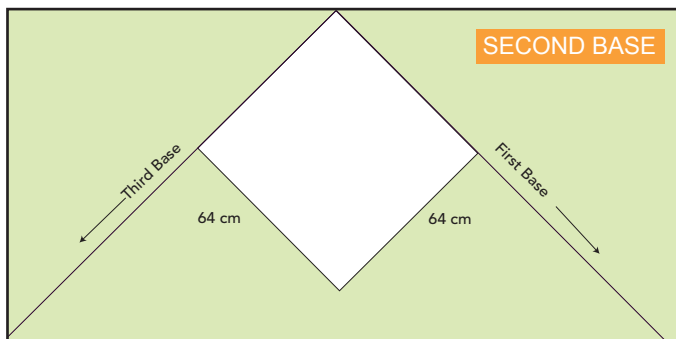


Diagram 3B



THIRD BASE

64 cm

64 cm

64 cm

64 cm

Home Base

Second Base

- 10

## Equipment

(Bat, Ball, Gloves)

5. The bat shall be a round staff not more than 70 millimetres in width and not more than 1.10 metres or less than 70 centimetres, in length.
6. The ball shall be a hurling ball (size 5), 98 grams to 130 grams weight, and between 227 and 255 millimetres in circumference.
7.
  - a. In all official matches players must wear clean and proper attire, skirts, shirts, blouses, shorts or trousers must be worn in club (team) colours and must be worn for the duration of the match. Socks, stockings or tights must be worn and must be in club (team) colours.
  - b. No spikes or gloves will be permitted. The sliotar must be caught with the bare hand.
  - c. Fielders may wear helmets with face guards but these are not compulsory.

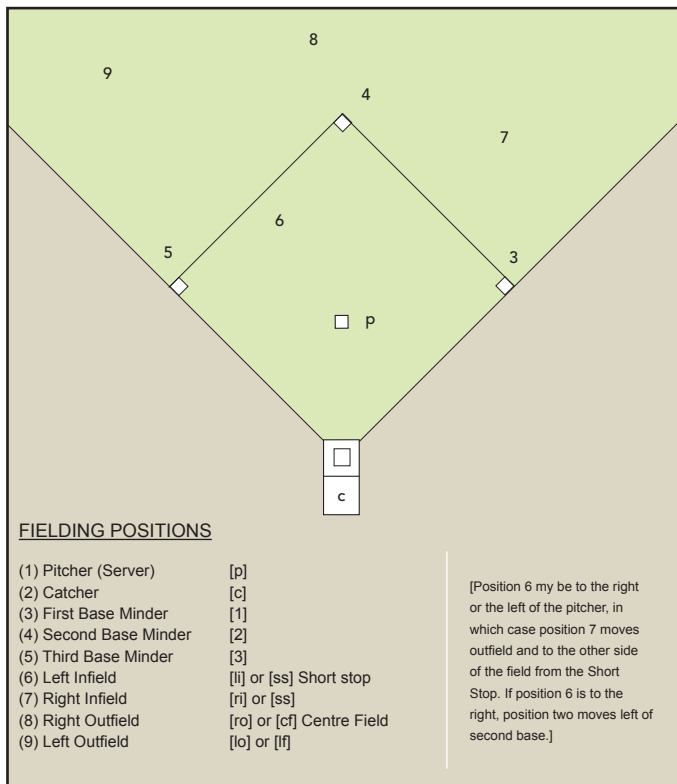
## Teams

### (Field Positions and Substitutions)

8. a. Teams shall consist of not more than nine players each. Each captain or manager must insure that the referee has an accurate team list in the correct batting order; with the initial fielding positions recorded.
- b. All batters' names must appear, in full, on the batting order with both first names and surnames written legibly, and distinguishing middle names or other titles must be made clear where any two players have the same first and second names.
  - i. This must be done in advance to allow the match to start on time.
  - ii. No more than 12 players from the panel may play in a match. Three (3) substitutions may be made in a match, once the referee has been informed. Runners on base may be substituted. A temporary substitution may be made for a Blood Injury.
  - iii. No listed batter may be omitted from the batting order for any reason.

9. The players of each team taking the field may be arranged as follows (Diagram 4).

Diagram 4



The pitcher at the pitcher's stand – 1; The catcher in the catcher's box – 2; One player adjacent to each base – 3, 4, and 5; and the remainder of the players in any position on fair ground – 6, 7, 8 and 9, may be assigned by the pitcher, captain or team manager. (Numbers above refer to numbered positions in Diagram 4). Numbers and letters in square brackets [ ], are markings used on score sheets to indicate player's positions. The catcher may take up any safe position inside the Catcher's box.

10. a. The batting team shall remain at the batters' bench or area when not at play. Batters must not approach the batting area until called, by name, by the referee or scorekeeper.
- b. The batter must then give his/her name to the referee. If a batter ignores a third call to bat, then he/she will be called out.

## Play

11. The referee will call both captains and make a toss for choice of batting/fielding, before the game commences.
12. a. The game, when commenced, shall continue until each side has had five innings (seven innings in All Ireland Senior Championship Semi-finals and Finals).
  - b. The team, which has scored the greater number of points (or runs) at the end of the game, shall be the winners. If, at the end of a knock out match, the scores are level, a toss will be made, and two additional innings will be played to decide the winner, commencing with batter number one. Substitutions may be made. If the sides are still drawn, then the team which has won more innings, shall be declared the match winners. If the innings won method fails to decide, then the match will be refixed (replayed).
  - c. The team last to bat shall not continue the match if and when they have scored more than the opposing team on their final batting chance.
13. a. The pitcher, facing home base, should present the ball to the batter. The pitcher must take no more than two steps onto the pitcher's stand and deliver the ball under-arm (underhand) towards home base.



# THE RULES OF GAA ROUNDEES

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- b. The ball must pass over home base, not lower than the batter's knee nor higher than the batter's shoulder. The pitcher must be in contact with the pitcher's stand, and not in front of it, at the time the ball is released. If the ball is outside these limits it will be declared a Bad Ball. A batter may not run, and the call is against the pitcher.

If the ball hits the ground, bounces, and is struck by the batter, the call is a Bad Ball.

- c. On a bad ball the ball is dead and no play can take place, unless it is the third bad ball (not necessarily



in succession); in which case the batter goes to first base and all runners advance one base each. A run will be scored provided a runner coming home from third base touches home base. Play on the ball ends once the referee calls the next batter. (A runner coming home and not having touched home base will then be declared out).

- d. If, in the referee's opinion, a pitcher deliberately delivers three bad balls, then the referee may allow each of the batter and runners to move two bases.
  - e. It is permissible for the fielding team to change the pitcher at any time, but good pitches and bad pitches will stand.
  - f. The pitcher is free to move from the Pitcher's stand to play the ball. No infielder may take up a position nearer to home base than the pitching distance, until the pitch is good.
14. a. A batter, having taken up a position, must receive one good ball before changing to bat on the other side.

- b. A batter may not stand in advance of home Base. A batter may not obstruct the catcher's view of the pitcher (nor the pitcher's view of the catcher) or vice versa, or the pitched ball.
- c. A batter may not encroach on the catcher's box. For the first offence a warning should be given and for a second offence the batter should be declared out.
- d. Each batter shall be entitled to three good pitches before being required to leave home base.
- e. The catcher may not enter the Batter's Box nor have either foot outside the Catcher's Box until the ball is in play.

15. The ball must be struck in a forward direction and to be in play must enter the field of play without touching foul ground, be legally played by a fielder, remain in the catcher's box or land in the catcher's box and travel directly over the end line. That is, a ball struck sideways and entering foul ground from the batter's/catcher's box will be called a foul ball and on the third good ball the batter is declared out.

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16. If a batter throws or tosses a bat in a dangerous manner, then a warning will be given and, if the act is repeated, then the batter will be disqualified from the game.
17. a. If, on a third good ball, the batter fails to hit the ball and the catcher holds the ball before it touches the ground, then the batter is out, runners may try to advance and may be put out.
- b. A batter must swing in an obvious attempt to hit the ball.



18. a. If a batter hits a good ball and it first touches foul ground (shaded in Diagram 1) he/she is not entitled to leave home base. The hit shall count against him/her and, if it is the third hit, then he/she shall be declared out.  
b. A foul ball is a dead ball. No play can be made.
19. a. When a batter leaves home base each runner on a base may advance to the next and succeeding bases.  
b. If the batter, having struck the ball, leaves the marked batter's box on a first or second hit, then he/she **must** continue to first base and **may not** return to the batting position.  
c. A batter is deemed to have left the batter's box if no contact has been kept with the box by either foot or any part of the body.
20. On a third hit, a batter must vacate the batter's box. No runs may be scored while the batter is in the box.
21. a. A base runner shall be declared out if a member of the fielding side, possessing the ball, touches the runner or touches the base before the runner.

- b. If a base is tagged when a runner over-runs and, unless the next base is available, the runner is out; except at first base. The batter is allowed on first base unless the batter definitely tries for second base.
  - c. If a base is occupied then it cannot be tagged. This action does not restrict the base holder from running to the next base, provided it is untagged or unoccupied. The ball may not be thrown at a runner (or batter).
  - d. All bases become untagged when the pitcher steps onto the pitchers stand.
22. a. Base runners may not deviate between bases so as to avoid being tagged.
- b. If a fielder is waiting with the ball, then he/she should try to contact a runner with only the hand, or by light touch. The runner may not claim obstruction.
  - c. A runner may not deviate from the straight line, but if it is possible to avoid contact by sliding under or jumping over a fielder, then the runner may do so without penalty. If contact is made in any way, even accidentally, with the fielder holding the ball, then the runner is out.

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- d. If the ball touches any other fielder or spectator before a fielder catches the ball, an out will not be declared.

23. A fielder may not stand on a base nor on lines between bases so as to put a runner off course, unless the fielder has the ball. The runner is entitled to occupy the base to which he/she is running. A fielder must be seen to be holding the ball firmly, at the time of the tag on a base or a runner. If the ball is dropped in the tagging motion, then the fielder has not had possession of the ball.



24. If a fielder catches a struck ball before it touches the ground, the batter is out and runners may advance. If a fielder is touching foul ground when the ball is struck the play or catch is illegal. The ball is dead and the batter is entitled to receive another good ball.
25. a. Batters shall bat in the order in which their names appear on the team list.
- b. In subsequent innings the first batter is the one whose name follows the last batter in the preceding (immediately previous) innings.
26. a. Bases must be touched in legal order: 1st, 2nd, 3rd and home base. Players obliged to return must do so in reverse order to the last base they were legally entitled to occupy.
- b. A player must return if an umpire or referee determines that he/she has failed to make contact with a base and, in doing so, has proceeded to the next base. The umpire at the relevant base will extend both arms vertically to indicate that the runner has missed the base.



- c. The runner has a right to return to the untagged base.
  - d. Failure of a runner to touch a base, and who is declared out, shall not affect the status of preceding or succeeding runners who touch each base in the correct order.
27. a. No runner shall score ahead of another preceding him/her, if the preceding runner is not out or in danger of being put out.
- b. A base cannot be occupied by more than one runner.
28. a. The ball is not in play until it is struck, or has passed, as a good ball, over home base.
- b. If a batter strikes and does not run, then runners on base may not occupy the next base, unless it is the third good ball, or there is a catch. Runners may not leave the base until the ball is in play.
  - c. Umpires should extend both arms vertically to indicate that a runner has left early.



## Match Officials:

(Referee, Umpires, Scorekeeper)

29. All bases become untagged when the pitcher steps onto the pitcher's stand. BASE PLAY MUST BE DECISIVE. Umpires faced with split decisions must allow that the fielder was not fast enough to win the decision, and the runner is declared in.
30. The referee shall have full charge of, and be responsible for, the proper conduct of the game. His or her duties and jurisdiction shall extend to all points of the game. No player shall dispute the accuracy of the referee's judgement and decision on play. After the toss only the team manager so identified by the captain to the umpires, or the captain, will have power to approach the referee on points of misconduct, or substitution calls.

For any unsporting conduct the referee may award batters up to two bases, or declare batters or runners out.

The referee must acquire the two teams' batting lists before the toss, and ensure that no player, supporter or spectator is nearer than 12 metres to fair ground.

31. Three umpires shall be appointed to assist the referee in decisions as to players reaching bases. They shall take up positions one each adjacent to 1st, 2nd and 3rd bases, in such a way as to be no interference to any player or runner during the game. An umpire will indicate an out at the relevant base by extending one arm vertically, until noticed by the referee, and the runner involved has left the field of play. Outs may be called only by the referee or the umpires, and fielders calling outs will be considered by match officials as demonstrating unsporting conduct.
32. The referee is best positioned in his or her own judgement where he or she can see all or most of the play; somewhere in the vicinity of home base and slightly behind it, and behind or beside the catcher. The referee must be in a position to judge the flight of the ball from the pitcher to the catcher, and call the pitch good or bad.

### Notes for referees

If a runner fails to touch home base in running in from third base, then a score may not be recorded for that runner, even if the play was a walk on (for three bad balls, not necessarily in succession, when the batters and runners must advance one base only, without being put out). If the runner returns to tag home base before the pitcher is ready to deliver to the next batter, the score will be recorded. If the pitcher is preparing to pitch to a subsequent batter, it is too late for the runner to seek the lost score. (The runner is out).

It is not necessary for the referee to make a call the instant the ball is hit, passes the batter or touches foul ground. It is best if that is done, but, the ball is a foul ball, even if it is called after runners may have advanced one or two bases, at which time everybody returns safely to where they started, unless it is the third good ball, in which case the batter is out and runners must return anyway.

If, at the third out, home base is not tagged, then any runner may run home and score; except for foul outs.

### Scorekeeping

The following markings have been found to be very useful in filling the scoresheet during a match. They are not necessary, but will provide extremely useful and interesting statistics on a game. A referee must have a serviceable system of recording the basic points needed to make a decision on how the match ended, bearing in mind that the batting order and the number of outs must be known at all points in the game.

Marks for the batter or runner:


When a batter is called	/
When a runner touches home base	x
When a batter or runner is put out	Ø
When a batter scores a home run	xH
When a batter gets a walk on	/W
When a batter goes out on a foul ball	ØF
When a batter brings home a runner	/.
When a batter brings home two runners	/:
When a batter brings home three runners	/:.
When a batter scores a home run with bases loaded	x::
When a batter is not called	—
When a batter is pitched out	ØP

### For fielders:

When a fielder makes a catch C3  
(The number is of the batter caught)

When a fielder makes an out and D2  
doubles the ball for another out  
(The number is for the player making the second out)  
This could be a C (Catcher)

T instead of D for a treble play (3 outs)  
The 2 in D2 indicates that the ball ended up for  
the last play at second base.

A spectacular play, catch or double play  
(a star play) 

# Cumann Cluiche Corr na hÉireann

## Cumann Lúthcleas Gael



Coisde: \_\_\_\_\_ Data: \_\_\_\_\_ Comórtas: \_\_\_\_\_

Áit: \_\_\_\_\_ Réiteoir: \_\_\_\_\_

Foirme (Baile): \_\_\_\_\_

### Innings

Ui	Ainm	Áit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
Iomlán									

Foirme (Eile):									
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
Iomlán									

Umpires: \_\_\_\_\_ 1st Base: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Base: \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd Base: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_



## Pitching Distances

Age Group	Pitching Distance
• Under 13 boys & girls	9 metres
• Under 14 boys & girls	9 metres
• Under 15 boys & girls	10 metres
• Under 16 boys & girls	10 metres
• Minor Ladies	11 metres
• Minor Men	11 metres
• Minor Mixed	11 metres
• Senior Ladies	11 metres
• Senior Men	12 metres
• Senior Mixed	12 metres

### Pitch Dimensions

- All ages to Under 16, 20 metres between the bases making the pitch 80m through the bases.
- All Minor and Senior games, 25 metres between the bases making the pitch 100m through the bases.

Visit [www.gaarounders.ie](http://www.gaarounders.ie) and/or [www.gaa.ie](http://www.gaa.ie)

GAA Rounders.  
National Rounders Secretary,  
Croke Park Stadium, Jones' Road, Dublin 3.

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