



**BEEP BASEBALL
FIELD**

- ◆ After a hit, sighted spotters instantly call out a number that lets fielders know the general direction of the ball. The fielders coordinate their defensive moves according to the number called. Spotters can call out only one number, or the batter is awarded a run. Fielders, however, can verbally communicate with each other, and frequently do. A defensive player does not have to throw the ball to another player to record an out. Batters are out if the ball is fielded before they reach the buzzing base.
- ◆ The fielder must have the ball in hand and off the ground to constitute possession and get the batter out.
- ◆ Because many visually impaired players have some sight, players wear blindfolds.
- ◆ Excessive noise during the game makes it impossible for the players to hear the ball and bases. Please save your cheers for later!!!



*Baseball where the players are blind
and
the umpires aren't!*

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The Ball That Beeps

IT LOOKS LIKE A BASEBALL... There's a ball and a bat. There are fielders, a pitcher, a catcher, and a batter at the plate.

But it sure doesn't sound like a baseball. The ball beeps and the bases buzz. Spectators don't cheer until the end of the play. This beep baseball, an entirely original competitive sport that lets athletes who are blind or have low vision suit up for a special version of America's favorite pastime.

Beep baseball also builds the players' mental and physical confidence and creates a bond between sighted and persons with visual impairments.

In 1964, Charlie Fairbanks, an Engineer with Mountain Bell and a Telephone Pioneer developed the first beep baseball. There in Colorado he implanted a beeping device in a softball as a recreational and educational tool. By the spring of 1975, the Minnesota Telephone Pioneers had presented this "beeping" baseball to a blind athlete in Minneapolis. There in Minneapolis he put together the 1st Beep Baseball team. Then, across the Mississippi River in St. Paul another team was formed. Finally, these 2 teams played each other. By 1976 Beep Baseball rules were created and the game began to spread across the country. In that same year, The National Beep Baseball Association (NBBA) was created in Chicago. Dedicated volunteers form the backbone of the NBBA's programs, including the annual World Series.

Today there are many athletes with visual impairments enjoying the benefits of playing a sport that used to belong exclusively to the sighted. With the help of sighted volunteers, athletes that are blind or have low vision dive onto the ground to stop a beeping baseball or run full speed toward the sound of a buzzing base to score a run!!

Perhaps beep baseball's greatest contribution is the important bridge it is creating between persons who are sighted and visually impaired. Sighted people go away from a beep baseball game with a new appreciation of what blindness is all about. They know they just witnessed a prime example of overcoming a disability. A person who is blind goes home with the deep satisfaction of knowing with the assistance of a sighted person, that they too can play the great "American Pastime."

RULES OF THE GAME

- ◆ Games last six innings, with extra innings to break ties. Each team has three outs an inning.
- ◆ Teams use a 16-inch softball containing a beeping device
- ◆ There is no second base. First and third bases are 4-foot-high cylinders containing speakers. The bases are 100 feet from home plate and 10 feet off each foul line.
- ◆ A batted ball must travel at least 40 feet to be considered fair. If a batter makes contact, a base operator throws a switch that randomly activates a buzzer on one of the two bases.
- ◆ The runner must identify the buzzing base and run to it before the ball is fielded by a defensive player. If the runner is safe, a run scores. There is no running from one base to another.
- ◆ The batter, pitcher and catcher are on the same team, working together to get a hit. The pitcher and catcher for each team are sighted. The catcher sets the target where the batter normally swings. The pitcher—20 feet from home plate—attempts to place the ball on the hitter's bat. The pitcher must say "ready" just before releasing the ball and "pitch" as it is released.
- ◆ A player does one of three things when batting: hits the ball and is retired by the defense; hits the ball and earns a safe call, which scores a run; or strikes out.
- ◆ Four strikes are allowed, and the last strike must be a clean miss. There are no walks. However, one ball is allowed.
- ◆ Six players are on defense: a first baseman, a right fielder, a middle fielder, a left fielder, a third baseman and a back fielder. *(continued on back)*