

**CSE Reception at the ballpark**, from 5:30pm, second level behind sections 214–216. Look for stairs near 114–116, or lift at the Pettibone’s Grill entrance off Washington St. The *doubleheader* (two 7-inning games!) starts at 5:35, 2nd game probably 8:15–10:15 or so, with fireworks afterward.

What is the secret to enjoying a Baseball game? It is to enjoy the fresh air, the warm day or cool evening, the company of the other fans, and the sights and sounds of the game. But if you wish to understand more about the game itself, read on!

The Buffalo Bisons are a “Triple-A” team, meaning the highest level of the Minor Leagues, one step below the two Major Leagues, called the National League (NL) and the American League (AL). The Bisons are associated to the Cleveland Indians in the AL, and Bisons players regularly are “called up” when Cleveland needs a player. The *visiting team* will be the Pawtucket (Rhode Island) Red Sox, which is similarly the “farm team” of the major-league Boston Red Sox of the AL.

### What to Watch For

Baseball teams have 9 turns to bat called *innings*, starting with the visiting team. Spectators sing a traditional song called “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” after the visiting team has had its 7th turn, and the home team does not take their 9th turn if they have already won by scoring more *runs*. (*Subtract 2 from both numbers for a minor-league doubleheader!*) The non-batting team sends 9 players onto the field, and they take the 9 positions shown in the diagram below. In all leagues except the NL, the batting team can replace the pitcher by a 10th player called the “Designated Hitter” (DH), who doesn’t play in the field. The three little squares and the pentagon are the actual bases and Home Plate, and the quarter-pie slice defined by the two *baselines* separates *fair territory* from *foul territory*.

The Pitcher hurls the ball to his Catcher, while the batter—standing in the “batter’s box” either left or right of Home Plate—decides whether to swing his bat at the ball. If he does, he tries to hit the ball in fair territory without a fielder either catching it in the air or *throwing him out*. The batter may run past first base if he thinks he can make it to the next base safely, and runners already on the bases may advance to the next base and even score *runs* by reaching Home Plate, if they can do so without getting *thrown out*. If the batter doesn’t swing, the *home plate umpire* standing behind the Catcher should call a *strike* if the ball crossed the plate in the *strike zone* roughly between the batter’s knees and armpits, and a *ball* otherwise. Four balls gives the batter a “free walk” to first base, but 3 strikes and “you’re out!” Swinging and missing the ball counts as a strike, while hitting it into foul territory counts as a first or second strike but *not* as a third strike—so you may even see batters deliberately “foul off” pitches to try to tire out the pitcher! Three outs ends an inning, and the fielding team comes in to bat while the batting team “takes the field.”

What does “thrown out” mean? It depends on a key concept called *The Force*, which is even harder to explain in baseball than in *Star Wars*.

### The Force

The batter is said to be forced *at* first base, and a baserunner is forced at Base  $n$  *if* someone is simultaneously forced at Base  $n-1$ . (Ask a baseball fan to explain The Force, and chances are you’ll get a definition longer and less accurate than this good CSE inductive one!) If a runner is forced at a base, then he can be thrown out by a fielder merely catching the ball and touching that base with his foot or some other part of his body, before the runner touches the base. But if he is not forced, the fielder must *tag him out*, meaning to touch him with the ball, or glove holding the ball, before the runner touches the base. The fielder must always hold onto the ball. A spectacular case is when a runner is unforced at Home Plate and the ball is thrown to the catcher before he gets there. The runner may try either to “slide around the tag” or to run right into the poor catcher to try to make him drop the ball!

Another is when a runner on first tries to “steal second base” by running as the pitcher throws toward home. If the batter doesn’t hit the ball, the catcher needs to throw the ball to the fielder “covering” second base (usually the 2B or SS) to try to *tag* the runner out. But if the batter hit the ball, there would be a *force* at second base and the fielder need only touch the base—if he then threw to the first baseman before the batter touched there, it would be a *double play*, two outs!

**Other Things to Watch For**—these may or may not happen in the game:

- **Home Run.** A fly ball hit beyond the outfield fence in fair territory is a *home run*: the batter and all baserunners score runs! The fielders and umpires will have downcast eyes, not just because they are sad but because if a runner forgets to touch a base, the fielding team can throw the next ball there and make an “appeal play” for an out!
- **Sacrifice Fly.** When a hit ball is caught in the air—even in foul territory—the runners have a “backward force” to their base of origin. If they started running forward when the ball was hit, they must go back and “tag up” by touching that base. But then they may try to run forward. (They are not then forced because the batter is already out—the base case fails.) You may see a runner on third base score a run this way—then the batter is said to have hit a “sac fly.”
- **Bunt.** The batter may hold the bat horizontally across home plate to try to hit the ball only a short distance. Even if he is thrown out at first base, if he helped a runner reach the next base, it is called a “sacrifice bunt.”
- **Intentional Walk.** If there is a runner on second and/or third base, but not on first base, the fielding team may elect to throw four balls deliberately “outside,” and *give* the batter a “free walk” to first base! This is done because it creates “the Force” to help the fielding team.

### How to get downtown to Dunn Tire Park

*By car:* Take 33 and bear left at the end fork—you will be on Oak Street going south. My (KWR’s) favorite idea is to turn right onto N. Division Street immediately after the bus terminal and turn right again onto Ellicott Street going north, then turn left into a car park that charges only \$3 or \$5 for the whole evening. [If that entrance is closed, the one on the other side (Washington St.) will be open.] Then walk 2 blocks south on Ellicott to reach Dunn Tire Park.

*By Metro Rail:* Meet at the South Campus station by 5:20pm—CSEGSAs guides will help you get there by campus shuttle and then help you buy tickets (\$2.50 round trip) and board the subway trains. Trains run every 15 minutes at that time, and the trip to the Seneca station downtown takes under 20 minutes. Dunn Tire Park will be one street away on your left.

*By bus:* Take Bus 8A or 8B and ask the driver which stop will be closest to the ballpark. Other downtown buses may also get you within walking distance.

**Taxi may cost over \$20 each way and is not recommended!**