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(54) **BALL GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING THE SAME**

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(71) Applicant: **John Fitzpatrick**, Yonkers, NY (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

(72) Inventor: **John Fitzpatrick**, Yonkers, NY (US)

A ball game having three Pitchers, two Catchers, and 10 Batter-Fielders. The ball game is played on a ball field having first, second, and third bases and home plate. The ball game includes a ball and a bat. The game is played where the First Pitcher pitches to the first batter and the First Catcher assumes the catcher's position, the remaining Batter-Fielders assume their positions in and around the field. Play begins using standard rules regarding balls and strikes. The First Pitcher is replaced by the Second Pitcher if the First Pitcher allows a batter to reach base and is only allowed to pitch again if the Second and Third Pitchers have allowed a batter to reach base. If the first batter makes an out, the first batter is no longer eligible to hit, returns to the playing field and is replaced at bat by the second batter. Each consecutive fielder has a turn at bat. Play continues until after all players have had an opportunity to bat, Second and Third Pitchers have pitched and the Second Catcher has caught while the First Catcher is at bat, and the only remaining player in the Batting Lineup gets a base hit or makes an out against the current pitcher in the Pitching Cycle.

(21) Appl. No.: **15/236,380**

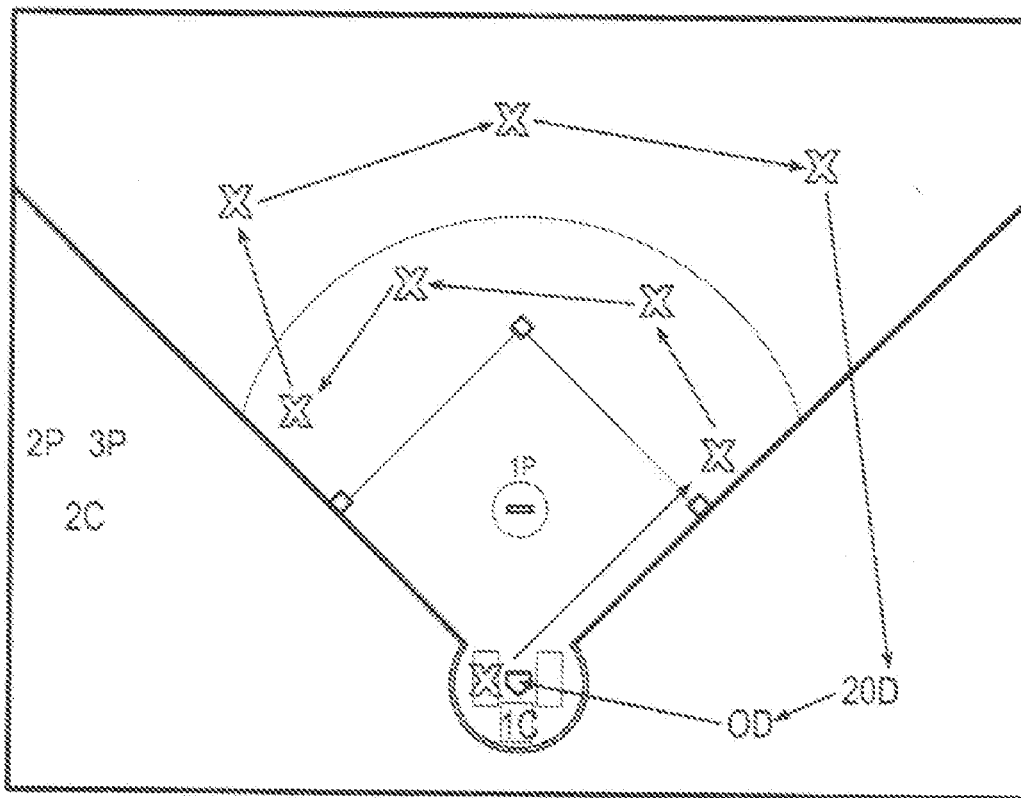
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**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A63B 67/00** (2006.01)



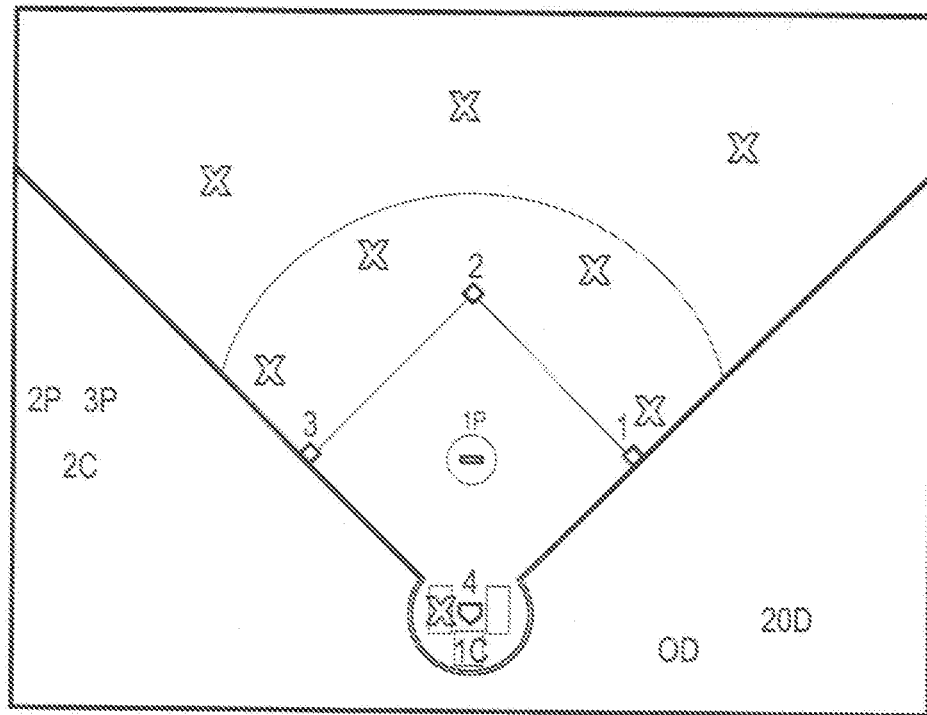


FIG. 1

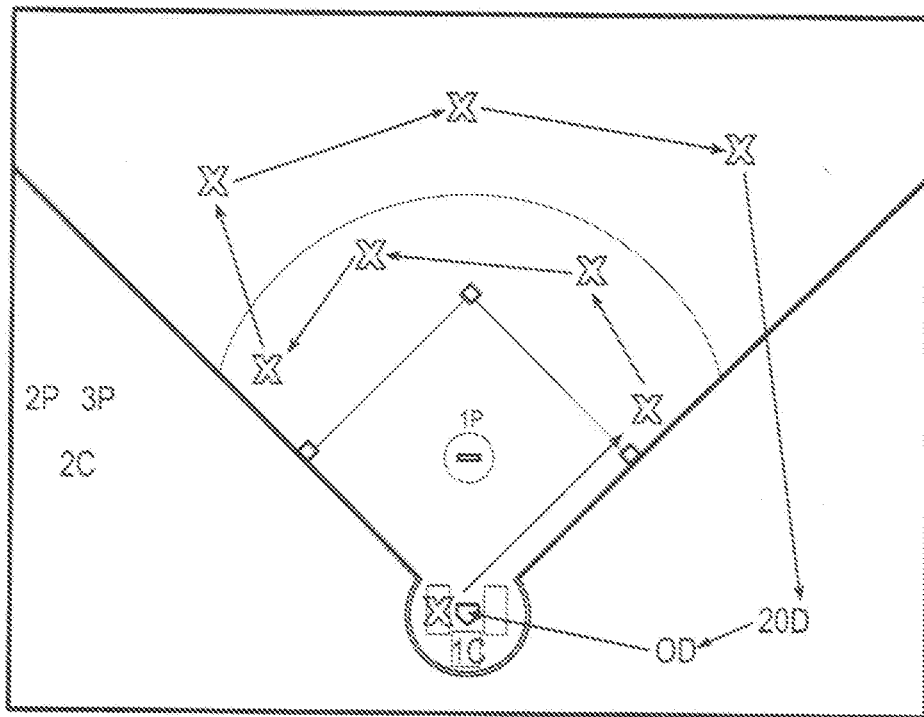


FIG. 2

Name	Pos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Smith X														
2	Jones X														
3	Davis X														
4	Lincoln X														
5	Jefferson X														
6	Carter 1C														
7	Brooks X														
8	Dowd X														
9	Harvey X														
10	Glass X														
11	Foster X														
12	Fate 2C														
	EH														
	EH														
Name Pos															
1	Parker 1P														
2	Lewis 2P														
3	Simon 3P														

FIG. 3

## BALL GAME AND METHOD OF PLAYING THE SAME

[0001] This application claims priority from provisional application 62/204202 filed Aug. 12, 2015 which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

### FIELD

[0002] The embodiments herein describe a ball game and method of playing a ball game in which there are no teams or innings and all players compete individually against each other.

### BACKGROUND

[0003] Player participation in amateur baseball and softball is declining at all levels of the sport. Contributing factors that are typically cited include the length of a typical ball game being too long, along with a general perception that ball game play is slow and boring. In addition, the increase in popularity of sports that focus on individual achievement instead of team play are considered to be more exciting and they do not require large numbers of players to form a team or league.

[0004] According to traditional baseball rules, 9 players are required to create a team. Consequently, a game of baseball requires a minimum 18 players (9 players on each team) and a baseball league requires, at minimum, 27 players (3 teams of 9 players). Realistically, a well-functioning team should consist of 12-15 players and a league should, ideally, consist of a minimum of 4 teams. So a well-functioning baseball league would require a minimum of 48-60 players.

[0005] As the available pool of ball players declines due to factors listed above, the ability to field teams, conduct ball games, and create functioning leagues is similarly diminished.

[0006] The invention streamlines the game of baseball or softball by lowering the required minimum of players required to play a game by 16% (from 18 to 15). The invention also individualizes, and incentivizes the marquee skills of ball play—pitching and hitting—while shortening the length of game play by approximately 75% (from 54 outs to 12-14 outs, depending on specific outcomes during game play). Furthermore, there are no baserunners, no innings, no coaching visits to the pitcher's mound, and pitching changes are pre-determined and automatic.

[0007] The invention creates a modification of ball play that does not require teams and leagues. The required number of players for a standard game according to the invention is 15 players-10 Batter-Fielders, 2 Catchers, and 3 Pitchers. Games may be played with more or less players (see "Variations of the Game").

### Detailed Description of the Drawings

[0008] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic representation of a first embodiment.

[0009] FIG. 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the fielders changing positions following an at-bat.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a sample scorecard.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0011] The first embodiment described herein includes a field having players thereon. A diagrammatic representation of the initial field position is shown in FIG. 1. The players include First Pitcher 1P, Second Pitcher 2P and Third Pitcher 3P, First Catcher 1C, Second Catcher 2C, and ten Batter-Fielders are indicated by "X". Batter-Fielders take up positions around the field and also take turns at bat, along with the catchers and occasionally the Second and Third Pitcher. A baseball bat (not shown) is used to hit a baseball (not shown) and the ball is caught using a baseball glove and fielded in the same manner as in baseball. Similarly, if the softball version was being played, a softball bat would be used to hit a softball which would be caught using a softball glove.

[0012] During any at-bat, the next batter will wait in an "on deck" position (OD). The batter following the "on deck" batter will wait in the "second on deck" position (2OD). These terms are similar to standard baseball terminology and they allow the game to move quickly between batters.

[0013] The Second Pitcher 2P and Third Pitcher 3P warm up prior to the game and remain on the left side of the playing field and ready to enter the game as a pitcher.

### Fielding Positions

[0014] The bases 1, 2, 3, 4 (home plate) are arranged in the same diamond shaped pattern as a baseball field, as shown in FIG. 1. The Batter-Fielders occupy the seven traditional baseball fielding positions: first base, second base, shortstop, third base, left field, centerfield, and right field, while the First Catcher occupies home plate and the First Pitcher occupies the pitcher's mound.

### Fielding Rotation

[0015] After batting, the batter moves to the first base position. Each fielder will rotate over to the next position— infielders move one position to the right, with the third baseman moving to the left field position. Outfielders move one position to the left, with the right fielder moving in to be the "second on deck (2OD)" hitter. The rotation of fielding positions is shown diagrammatically in FIG. 2.

[0016] Fielder movement achieves two functions: 1.) It speeds up the game by bringing the next hitters closer to home plate and 2.) It allows players the opportunity to play each position over the course of the game.

[0017] When the first batter is eliminated from the "at bat" position, he or she will take their position in the field at the position of first baseman. As each subsequent batter is eliminated, the first batter takes the position rotates out of the position of first baseman and into the positions of second baseman, short stop, third baseman, left field, center field and right field. The first batter is then locked into the position of right field. As the second batter and each subsequent batter is eliminated, each rotates through the positions enumerated in reverse order, beginning in right field, then center field, then left field, then third base, short stop, second base, and first base until they are locked in position for the remainder of the game.

[0018] Following each at-bat:

[0019] Batter—moves to first base position

[0020] First Baseman—moves to second base position

[0021] Second Baseman—moves to shortstop position

- [0022] Shortstop—moves to third base position
- [0023] Third baseman—moves to left field position
- [0024] Left Fielder—moves to centerfield position
- [0025] Center Fielder—moves to right field position
- [0026] Right Fielder—moves to “second on deck (2OD)” position
- [0027] Second on Deck (2OD) moves to On Deck
- [0028] On Deck moves to Batter

[0029] When the lineup is down to three batters, those batters will rotate between batting and the two on-deck batter positions. At this time, the coach may decide to “unlock” the fielders and move them to the positions best suited for each player. In this configuration, it may make it more difficult for the batters to obtain base hits.

[0030] In the event the position of first baseman is vacant because the batter is unable to play the field due to injury or other circumstance, the second on deck (2OD) position can temporarily play the position of first baseman until the next batter is up.

[0031] In addition, where neither catcher has batted until all of the fielding positions have been locked, when the first catcher bats, the second catcher catches. When the second catcher bats, the first catcher catches. The rotation of fielders is temporarily “frozen” following the at-bat of the first catcher and second catcher, because neither catcher plays the field.

#### Batting Lineup

[0032] When a Batter-Fielder, Catcher or Pitcher is at bat, they are referred to generally as the batter.

[0033] Batters receive turns at bat in a pre-determined order called the Batting Lineup. The Batting Lineup includes all ten Batter-Fielders (X) and both Catchers 1C, 2C. The First Pitcher 1P does not bat. The Second Pitcher 2P and Third Pitcher 3P do not bat unless they enter the game as an Extra Batter because all other batters have been eliminated from the game.

[0034] Sample Batting Lineup:

- [0035] 1. Batter-Fielder 1
- [0036] 2. Batter-Fielder 2
- [0037] 3. Batter-Fielder 3
- [0038] 4. Batter-Fielder 4
- [0039] 5. First Catcher 1C
- [0040] 6. Batter-Fielder 5
- [0041] 7. Batter-Fielder 6
- [0042] 8. Batter-Fielder 7
- [0043] 9. Batter-Fielder 8
- [0044] 10. Batter-Fielder 9
- [0045] 11. Batter-Fielder 10
- [0046] 12. Second Catcher 2C

#### Pitching Cycle

[0047] The pitchers enter the game in an order referred to as the Pitching Cycle. The Pitching Cycle is as follows. The First Pitcher 1P begins the game and pitches to the First Catcher 1C. A pitcher shall remain on the pitching mound until a batter reaches base safely on a hit, walk, or hit-by-pitcher. When a batter reaches a base safely, the First Pitcher 1P is removed from the pitching mound and replaced by the Second Pitcher 2P. This is repeated until the Third Pitcher 3P has had an opportunity to pitch. The order of the pitching cycle is repeated. After being replaced by another pitcher a

pitcher may re-enter the game to pitch after the other two pitchers each allow a batter to reach base safely.

[0048] To begin play, seven of the Batter-Fielders X take their positions in the field. The Batter in the Batting Lineup takes his or her turn at bat. Two remaining Batter-Fielders stand in the “on deck” (OD) and second on deck (2OD) positions. The First Pitcher 1P pitches and the First Catcher 1C catches. The same rules apply regarding the zone for strikes and balls. If the batter makes an out, s/he is eliminated from the batting lineup, but can still play the field for the remainder of the game. If First Pitcher 1P allows a hit, walk, or hit-by-pitch, he is replaced by Second Pitcher 2P. The First Pitcher 1P may return to pitch only when second 2P and third 3P pitchers have allowed a hit, walk, or hit-by-pitch. The term walk may also be referred to as “base on balls”.

[0049] The last remaining player who has not been eliminated from the game faces the current pitcher in the Pitcher Cycle. The outcome of this matchup determines the winner of the game, unless the Pitcher walks the Batter. In that case, the Pitcher is replaced by the next Pitcher in the Pitcher Cycle and the Batter bats again.

[0050] When a batter reaches base safely on a hit, walk, or hit-by-pitch, the First Pitcher 1P is removed and Second Pitcher 2P comes into the game to pitch. After his/her at-bat, the batter moves to the first base position, and the next batter in the batting lineup takes a turn at bat. It should be noted that no bunting is allowed in the game and a batter must swing at the ball. Moreover, the rules regarding strikes and balls may also be applied.

[0051] If the pitcher retires a batter on a fielded ball or strikeout, then the batter is eliminated from the batting lineup and the pitcher remains on the pitching mound to face the next batter in the batting lineup.

[0052] If a fielder makes an error, then both the batter and the pitcher remain in the game and replay the at-bat.

[0053] In another scenario, if all batters (all Batter-Fielders and both Catchers) have been retired with no batter reaching base, and the Second 2P and Third 3P Pitchers have not entered the game as a pitcher, the Second 2P and Third Pitcher 3P will get the opportunity to enter the game as an extra batter.

[0054] If the First Pitcher 1P retires all batters from the start of the game, then the Second Pitcher 2P enters the game as an extra batter. If the Second Pitcher 2P (now the batter) reaches base safely, the first pitcher 1P is eliminated from the game and the Second Pitcher 2P pitches to the Third

[0055] Pitcher 3P. If the Third Pitcher 3P enters the game as an extra batter and the Second Pitcher 2P retires the Third Pitcher 3P, the Second Pitcher 2P wins the game. However, if the Third Pitcher 3P reaches base safely, then the Third Pitcher wins the game.

#### Variations

[0056] While the basic game has been described above, varied embodiments of the game are described below.

#### Points Variation

[0057] In one aspect, the game is played as described above but points are accumulated throughout the game. Points are accumulated across multiple games for tournament or league play. Points may be awarded as follows:

**[0058]** a batter may be awarded points for reaching base safely, in particular a single or a walk are each awarded 1 point; a double: 2 points; triple: 3 points; or home run 5 points.

**[0059]** a pitcher may be awarded 1 point for retiring a batter on a fielded ball or 3 points for a strikeout.

**[0060]** the winner of the game receives an additional number of points, equal to the number of players in the game, including himself or herself, multiplied by two. For example, in a game of 15 total players, the winner receives an additional 30 points.

#### Re-Entry Variation

**[0061]** In another variation, a batter that has been eliminated from the lineup can earn re-entry by making a successful fielding play.

#### 12-14 Player Variation

**[0062]** An additional variation is played when there are fewer than 15 players available for a game. In this variation, the game can be played with as few as 13 players by eliminating the On Deck (OD), and/or Second On Deck (2OD) positions.

#### Imaginary Fielder Variation

**[0063]** In another variation, to be applied when there aren't enough players to cover each position on the baseball or softball diamond, a scorer or coach determines a batter's success or failure by estimating if a batted ball would have been caught by a fielder with reasonable abilities.

#### Coach-Pitch Variation

**[0064]** In another variation, when there aren't enough pitchers, a coach may pitch to all batters. In this variation, the coach remains as the pitcher, regardless of the outcome of each at-bat. The coach/pitcher cannot win the game.

#### Additional Players Variation

**[0065]** In yet a further variation, the number of pitchers, batters, and catchers is increased to accommodate additional players. It is suggested that one additional pitcher is added to the pitching rotation for every three additional batters.

#### Fielding Error Elimination Variation

**[0066]** In another variation, if any Batter-Fielder commits a fielding error, s/he is eliminated from the batting lineup and s/he finishes the remainder of the game in the field.

#### Batting Competition Variation

**[0067]** In another variation, the role of the Batter-Fielder is split into two separate roles: Fielder and Batter. Batters compete against other Batters and the roles of Fielders, Pitchers, and Catchers are not eligible to win the game. The roles of Batters and Fielders are split, such that the fielding positions are occupied by seven Fielders. Fielders do not bat and do not rotate to different positions. Pitchers cannot win the game. Catchers do not receive at-bats. Batters take turns at-bat in the batting order, but do not take fielding positions. In this variation, only a Batter can win the game.

#### Ball Variations

**[0068]** In addition to the variations set forth above, it is anticipated that the game described may be played with a baseball, softball, or the like. With baseball or softball, rules regarding the bats, bases, field dimensions, etc. would be standard for the game being played, i.e. baseball or softball.

#### Fund Raiser Variation

**[0069]** In this variation, players solicit monetary pledges for each hit he or she obtains while in the "at bat" position. In addition, players may solicit monetary pledges for each batter faced while in the "pitcher" position. The monetary pledges are then collected and donated to the cause or charity predetermined by the players or game organizers.

#### 3 Batter Limit

**[0070]** In this variation, each pitcher is replaced after facing three batters. When there are only 3 batters remaining in the lineup, the first pitcher (P1) returns to pitch. The Pitcher cycle resumes normally until play ends.

#### Pitchers Bat

**[0071]** This variation provides that all pitchers in are the batting lineup. If a pitcher's batting opportunity comes up while he or she is on the pitcher's mound, his or her batting opportunity is skipped until the next time through the batting order.

#### Next Fielder

**[0072]** After a batter hits, instead of taking their position immediately after hitting, they would get their glove and stand near first base, preferably in or near where a first base coach would stand in a normal baseball game. This position may be referred to as Next Fielder (NF).

**[0073]** The NF is part of the fielder rotation. So after the next batter hits, the NF moves to first baseman position, first baseman moves to second baseman position, etc., as described above.

**[0074]** After C1 or C2 bats, they return to the dugout to put their catcher's equipment back on. The catchers would not assume the NF position.

**[0075]** The batter who hits immediately after C1 or C2 would skip NF and go directly to playing first base.

**[0076]** Inserting an NF serves two purposes:

**[0077]** 1—It gives a player an additional few minutes to get their glove and get ready to enter the field, thus speeding up the game.

**[0078]** 2—After a catcher bats, the catcher would not get a glove and go to play first base.

1. A ball game comprising:

First, Second and Third Pitchers;

First and Second Catchers;

10 Batter-Fielders;

and a ball field having first, second, and third bases and home plate, a ball and a bat, whereby the First Pitcher pitches the ball to the first batter and the First Catcher assumes the catcher's position, the remaining nine Batter-Fielders assume their positions in and around the field, play begins using standard rules regarding balls and strikes, the First Pitcher is replaced by the Second Pitcher if the First Batter reaches a base and is only allowed to pitch again if the Second and Third Pitchers

- have each allowed a batters to reach at least one base, if the first batter strikes out, the first batter is no longer eligible to bat, returns to the playing field and is replaced at bat by the second batter, each consecutive batter has a turn at bat, play continues until all batter-fielders and catchers have had an opportunity to bat, Second and Third Pitchers have pitched and the Second Catcher has caught while the First Catcher is at bat, and the only remaining player eligible to bat gets a base hit or makes an out.
2. The game of claim 1 wherein the last remaining player wins having a hit facing the First Pitcher.
3. The game of claim 2 wherein the First Pitcher wins the game if the batter makes an out.
4. The game of claim 2 wherein the First Pitcher is replaced by the Second if the First Pitcher allows the Batter to reach base by Pitcher error.
5. The game of claim 5 wherein Pitcher error comprises a walk or hit-by-pitch.
6. The game of claim 1 wherein the game cannot be won on a walk, hit-by-pitch, or fielder's error.
7. The game of claim 2 wherein if the batter reaches base on a walk or hit-by-pitch, the batter gets a new at-bat and the First Pitcher is replaced by the Second Pitcher.
8. The game of claim 1 wherein if the batter reaches base on an error, both the batter and current pitcher "re-do" the at-bat.
9. The game of claim 1 wherein if the Second or Third Pitcher has not pitched when all other players have batted and been eliminated from batting, the Second Pitcher takes a turn at bat while the First Pitcher pitches.
10. The game of claim 9 wherein if the First Pitcher allows a base hit to the Second Pitcher, the Second Pitcher pitches to the Third Pitcher who takes a turn at bat.
11. The game of claim 9 wherein if the First Pitcher does not allow a base hit, walk, or hit-by-pitch, then the First Pitcher pitches to the Third Pitcher.
12. The game of claim 10 wherein if the Second Pitcher allows a base hit to the Third Pitcher, the Third Pitcher wins the game.
13. The game of claim 10 wherein if the Second Pitcher does not allow a base hit, base-on-balls, or hit-by-pitch, the Second Pitcher wins the game.
14. The game of claim 11 wherein if the First Pitcher allows a base hit, the Third Pitcher wins the game.
15. The game of claim 11 wherein if the First Pitcher does not allow a base hit, base-on-balls, or hit-by-pitch, the First Pitcher wins the game.
16. The game of claim 1 wherein the ball is a baseball.
17. A method of playing a ball game comprising the steps of:
- providing a plurality of ball players comprising First, Second and Third Pitchers, the pitchers forming a pitching cycle, First and Second Catchers, and ten Batter-Fielders;
  - providing a ball field having first, second, and third bases and home plate, a ball and a bat;
  - initiating play by the First Pitcher pitching to the first Batter-Fielder, the First Catcher assuming the catcher's position and the remaining nine Batter-Fielders assuming their positions in and around the field;
  - enabling the second Batter-Fielder, each consecutive Batter-Fielder, and the Catchers and Pitchers a turn at bat;
  - eliminating a player if the player makes an out;
  - replacing a pitcher from the pitching cycle if the pitcher allows a base hit, base-on-balls, or hit-by-pitch;
  - continuing play until the only remaining player gets a base hit or makes an out against the only remaining pitcher in the Pitching Cycle.
18. The method of claim 17 wherein the ball is a baseball, the bat is a baseball bat, and the bases are located according to the standard rules of baseball.
19. The method of claim 17 wherein the last remaining player wins having a hit facing the First Pitcher.
20. The method of claim 17 wherein the First Pitcher wins if the last remaining player makes an out.

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