

GUIDE TO SCORING BASEBALL – FIFTH INNING

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TOP OF THE FIFTH

The fifth inning begins with the Cubs still leading 2 – 1, but Cubs pitcher Steve Trachsel has just served up the pitch that Mark McGwire hit for his 62nd home run. The Cubs would like to strike back in this inning.

The first batter is Jose Hernandez. He's 0 for 1 with a walk. Usually when these sorts of statistics are reported, the announcer (or the box score) is reporting the number of hits and the number of at-bats. Even though Hernandez has two plate appearances in the game, he only has one at-bat. The walk he got in the first inning doesn't count as an at-bat because the pitcher didn't let him swing the bat. Batting average is the number of hits divided by the number of at-bats, so the distinction is important. If walks were counted as at-bats, a batter who walks a lot would wind up with a very low batting average, even though he winds up on base a lot. Other plate appearances that don't count as at-bats include when a batter is hit by a pitch (which isn't an at-bat for the same reason as a walk), or when the batter sacrifices a runner either through a sacrifice fly that scores a run, or a sacrifice bunt that advances a runner. In these two cases, the plate appearance isn't counted as an at-bat because the batter wasn't trying to get a hit, he was intentionally giving up an out so the team could advance a runner. Baseball is a team sport, and team play like hitting a sacrifice shouldn't penalize a batter by lowering his batting average.

If you look at the scoring for this inning on the right (the inning is simple enough that I didn't break down each batter as in previous innings), you can see that the play in Hernandez's at-bat box (**F9**) is in green. On my actual scorecard, I don't have anything written in this box except a **1** with a circle around it. So I know he got out, but at the time, I missed the play. Much later, as I was writing these pages I came across the Retrosheet^[1] project, which contains a box score for this game. By comparing the Cardinals put outs with what action I did record, I was able to determine that Hernandez hit a fly ball that was caught by Mabry in right field. There's no listing of balls and strikes in the box score, so I still don't know what the pitch count was when Hernandez hit is fly ball out.

When you miss a play, you miss it. Unless you're the official scorer for the game, it probably doesn't matter too much. You could ask the person next to you to recount the play, or if it's a professional game, find out what happened on the Internet. Regardless, you should write down what you do know. In my case, I was probably going to get a beer or going to the bathroom, and when I got back to the game, Hernandez was already walking back to the dugout.

The next batter, Mark Grace, hits a ground ball to the shortstop and is thrown out at first. The play is recorded **6-3**. He's now 2 for 3 in the game.

Sosa comes up next, and after getting to a full count, Mercker throws a pitch off

	HR				
	3B				
	2B				
	1B				
	BB				
	HP				
①					
	HR				
	3B				
	2B				
	1B				
	BB				
	HP				
②	1				
	HR				
	3B				
	2B				
	1B				
	BB				
	HP				
	1	4			
	2	3	5		
x ③					
	HR				
	3B				
	2B				
	1B				
	BB				
	HP				
	1	2			

cubs fifth inning

[1] <http://www.retrosheet.org/>

the plate which Sammy takes for a two-out walk. We draw a line from home to first with a little tail, and circle the **BB** on the right side of his box.

Glenallen Hill comes up o for 2 in the game and hits a pop fly to the shortstop. Some scorers will record a *pop fly* as **PF6** or **P06**, a *line drive* as **L6**, and a normal *fly ball* as **F6**. For this game, I used **F** to indicate all three of these outcomes, and **FO** to indicate a foul ball out. Using different letters for different outs gives some flavor to your scoring, but it doesn't change the box score or the statistics. Also, like with spectacular McGwire's home run, I will add exclamation marks when a fielder makes a spectacular play to get an out.

The inning is over for the Cubs. They got no runs, no hits, there were no Cardinal errors, and one man was left on base. Mercker didn't strike anyone out, but he did walk a batter. We can't record the strikes and pitches because we don't know what the pitch count was on Hernandez when he got out.

BOTTOM OF THE FIFTH

From a scoring standpoint, the bottom of the fifth is even less interesting than the Cub fifth inning. Despite giving up the home run to McGwire, Trachsel is still cruising through the Cardinals lineup, only one mistake on his line for the game. The scoring for the Cardinals in the fifth is on the right.

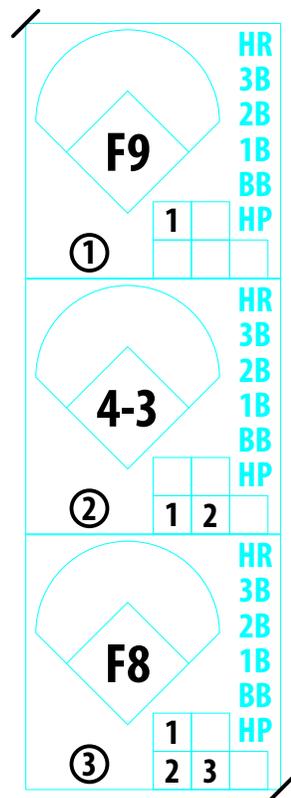
Ron Gant steps in o for 1 with a fly out to right in the second inning, and in this inning, he hits another fly ball to the Cub's right fielder Sammy Sosa. One out, **F9** in his box.

John Mabry is also o for 1. He takes two balls from Trachsel before grounding out to the second baseman. The play is scored **4-3**, two outs.

Luis Ordaz popped out to the second baseman in the third inning. In this inning he hits a fly ball, caught by the Cub center fielder for out number three. **F8**.

Trachsel gets them out in order this inning. No runs, no hits, no Cub errors, no baserunners, no strikeouts and no balls. If you're still counting, Trachsel threw five strikes and nine pitches in this inning.

Stay tuned! Lots of excitement coming up next inning!



cardinals fifth inning