

The Pitch Scoring System

Alex Reisner (baseball.alexreisner.com)

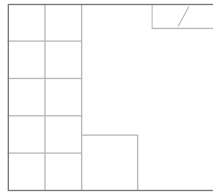
I. INTRODUCTION

The majority of baseball scoring systems model the game around the phenomenon of batters advancing along the basepaths in an attempt to score runs. What many fans are interested in, however, is the batter-pitcher duel. Hall of Fame pitcher Rollie Fingers once lamented, "I would plan my pitches days in advance of my start and get so wound up I couldn't sleep the night before my turn." The stress forced Fingers to become a relief pitcher, but the point is that anything worth getting so worked up about is worth notating.

This system is still in the experimental stages and certainly not as elegant as some of the more tested and refined methods. Please contact me by email at baseball@alexreisner.com with any criticism, comments, or suggestions.

II. THE SCORECARD

Each box on the scorecard has two main areas: the pitch boxes and the field diagram. There is also a pitch count box at top right of each field diagram. The pitch boxes keep track of data for each pitch in a linear fashion. The field diagram is for notating all action on the field. It is used in the same way the diamond is used in the Situational system—it only looks different because it's rotated 45 degrees. The pitch count box logs the number of pitches the opposing team has thrown (strikes and total).

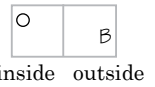


Pitch Locations

Each pitch thrown is logged in a pitch box with one or two symbols, depending on how much data you wish to record. The most basic symbol will indicate the location and result or the umpire's "call" on the pitch:

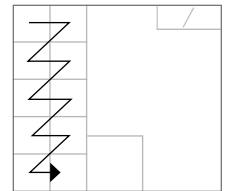
- strike (called)
- strike (swinging)
- foul
- X put in play
- B ball
- I intentional ball
- P pitchout

ONE of these symbols is drawn in the part of the pitch box corresponding to where the pitch was thrown. For ease of reading, inside pitches are always marked on the left side of the box, outside pitches on the right side, *regardless of whether the batter is hitting from the left or right side of the plate*. For this reason it is a good idea to write an "L" or "R" on home plate on the field diagram to indicate a left- or right-handed batter.



Note that the box can be thought of as representing the strike zone if the pitch is a strike, but is obviously bigger than the strike zone on a ball. By no means does this system attempt to record the precise location of pitches as they cross the plate. It is intended for monitoring trends such as "Gonzalez is having trouble with inside pitches," or "Clemens is missing low with his splitter" (see below for instructions on recording pitch type data).

The sequence of the boxes is left to right, top to bottom.



If more than ten pitches are thrown to a batter, continue into the next batter's box and draw a heavy line after the last pitch.

After each at-bat, write the strike and total pitch counts for the current pitcher in the box at the top right. (If there is a pitching change in the middle of an at-bat you will need to draw another pitch count box for the second pitcher.)



Pitch Types

If you have a good view of the pitcher and you want to record pitch types, you can do so with the following symbols:

F	fastball
V	curve
C	changeup
P	splitter
L	slider
K	knuckleball
W	screwball

Write one of these symbols next to the pitch location symbol. You can define more pitch type symbols in the margin of your scorecard if necessary (for example, for 2- and 4-finger knuckle curveballs).

The four pitches at right: (1) Called strike on a fastball down the middle. (2) Fastball low for a ball. (3) Outside fastball fouled off. (4) Swing and a miss on a curveball low and away.

FO	FB
F-	v●

Note that the pitch type symbol has no relevance to pitch location. It should be drawn next to the pitch location symbol so as not to confuse the location of the pitch.

Situations

For complete documentation on how to record “regular” game data, see the Situational Scoring System documentation found at baseball.alexreisner.com. The only difference is that, since there’s no dedicated box for the catalyst, you have to do most of your writing in the outfield on the field diagram. It has been made as large as possible to accommodate this.

IV. EXAMPLE

The information recorded in the box at right is as follows: batter is hitting from the right with a runner (#38) on third base. The pitches are:

VB	FB	12/21
FO	FX	43
	38	
	R	2-

1. curveball low and away for a ball
2. fastball low and away for a ball
3. fastball down the middle for a called strike
4. fastball outside is put in play

The result of contact is a groundball (note the dotted line) to the second baseman and the batter is put out 4-3 for the second out of the inning. The runner on third scores and the batter is credited with an RBI. After the at-bat the pitcher has thrown 21 pitches, 12 of them strikes.