



## Chapter I. Mole Cup

The Mole Cup was invented by Franz Fisher, a former coach from the Bavarian Bats in Germany in 2010. It is an international invitational tournament open to any European or Worldwide team. Since 2011 this annual competition has been held in Germany, Italy and France alternately. The first edition was held in Freising, near Munich, with four participating teams: The Bavarian Bats from Freising, the Nogent Bandits from France and the Italian Ambassadors and Milan Tornados from Italy. The Milan Tornados won the tournament.

The 2nd edition, played in Italy in Bologna in 2012 had 10 participating teams. This event saw for the first time the participation of almost all the Italian teams in the 2012 Italian championships plus France and Germany.

The 3rd edition was played in France at the Parc du Tremblay in Champigny-sur-Marne just east of Paris in 2013. The 4th edition the following year returned to Italy in Rome.

The 5th, 6th and 7th editions were played in Germany in Freising, France at the Parc du Tremblay near Paris and Italy, in that order.

In the 7th edition, an All Star team made up of the best foreigner players in the Italian championship played in the event played in Parma under the sponsorship of the Parma Provincial Lions Clubs.



*7<sup>th</sup> Mole Cup (2017) – Award to the winning team of the tournament, the All Stars.*



The 8th edition was played again in Germany this time in Regensburg, at one of the best baseball facilities in Europe.

The 9th edition played in Rome last year saw Cuba, the United Kingdom and the United States team from New York City play the tournament for the first time in history. Also for the first time, there was a night demonstration game between the teams from Cuba and Italy. This edition was very special as it also marked the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the first game of baseball for the blind in 1994.

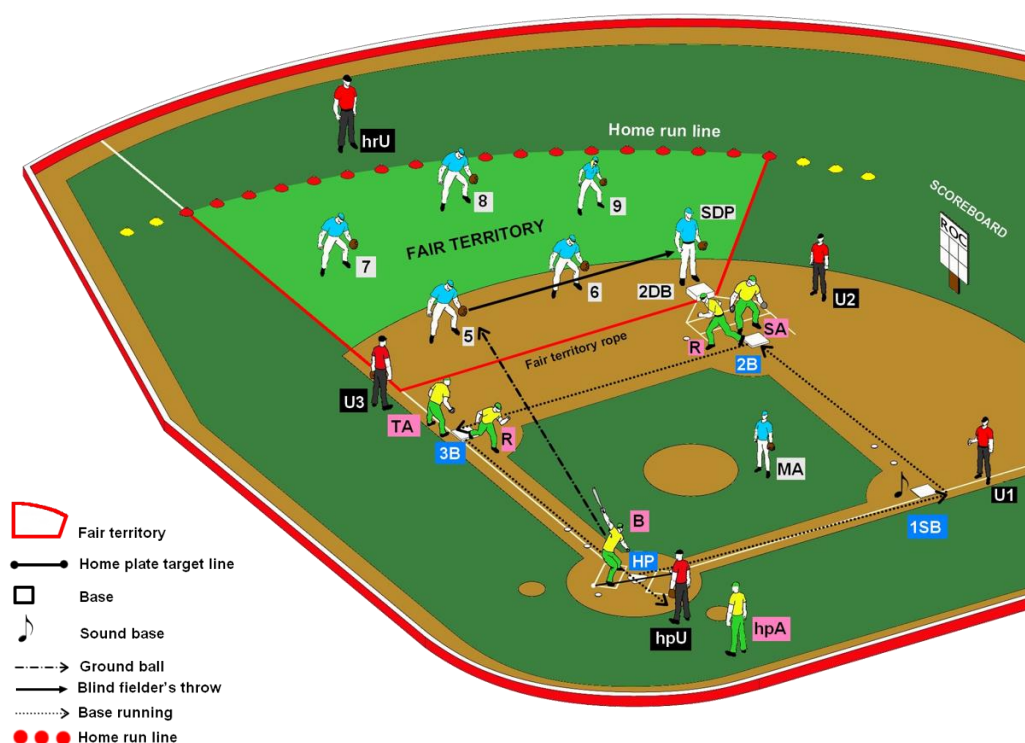


***9<sup>th</sup> Mole Cup (2019) – The Italian National Team that won the tournament.***

In 2020 the 10th edition of the Mole Cup was supposed to be held in Germany in Freising, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the event has been postponed to 2021.



## Chapter II. Game Rules Summary



### *Baseball for the Blind field with players, umpires and assistants in position.*

As reviewed in Lesson 1, each team is made up of 5 blind players, one sighted player and one sighted defensive assistant. The sighted defensive player and sighted assistant also serve as base coaches at second and third base when the team comes to bat.

There are 5 umpires on the field:

**hpU**: the home plate umpire,

**U1**: the first base umpire, who controls the beeping first base,

**U2**: the second base umpire,

**U3**: the third base umpire,

**hrU**: the home run umpire.

There are 3 assistants on offence:

**hpA**: the home plate assistant, who helps batters come to bat at the plate,

**SA**: the second base assistant, who assists the runner at second,



**TA:** the third base assistant, who assists the runner at third.

On defense there is a sighted mound assistant (MA), a sighted defensive player on the defensive second base (SDP) and 5 blind players in the field:

**5:** third base,

**6:** shortstop,

**7:** left fielder,

**8:** center fielder,

**9:** right fielder.

This is how to play the game:

The batter (B) puts the ball in play by tossing it up in the air and hitting it. In order for the batted ball to be ruled "FAIR BALL" or "IN PLAY," it must go beyond the string which starts at the left corner of the defensive second base (2DB) and extends to the third base foul line behind third base (3B). The defensive second base (2DB) is located approximately 13 feet (4 meters) beyond regular second base on a line extending along the 1st to 2nd baseline. The string is parallel to the running lane between 2nd and 3rd base 4 meters back. The ball must bounce at least one time before crossing the string.

The batter-runner (B) attempts to reach second base (2B) either by touching or going around first base (1SB). The batter-runner is safe if (s)he arrives on second base (2B) before the sighted defensive player (SDP), positioned on the defensive second base (2DB), catches the throw from a blind defensive player (5, 6, 7, 8 or 9). The batter-runner is out if first base is not properly rounded or second base is not reached in time.

The batter is allowed three swings and if (s)he does not put the ball in play or fails to hit it on the third and final swing, it is a strike out. A foul ball is always a strike.

The runner (R) on second base advances to third base and then to home plate (HP) on successive batted balls.

Runners can leave second base or third base only after the umpire has called the batted ball "FAIR" and this occurs at the moment the properly batted ball crosses the string.



Upon arrival at either second or third base, the runner must touch the base. The runner does not have to maintain contact.



*Casale, player from I Patrini Malnate, sliding on 2<sup>nd</sup> base.*

The batter-runner and the runner can try to reach an “extra base” only after the blind fielder has made a wild throw to the sighted second base player or after the sighted second base player has failed to catch the throw.

Runners have to reach the extra base before the sighted second base player retrieves the ball and returns to and touches the defensive second base.

A run is scored when the runner on third base crosses the home plate imaginary line (HP). The home plate line is 13 feet (4 meters) wide. The center of this line corresponds to the point of the home plate and from there it continues towards the left along the first base line six and a half feet (2 meters) and to the right six and a half feet following an extension of the first base foul line.

If the ball batted in fair territory rolls beyond 225 feet (68.6 m), it is considered a home run.

The sighted defense player on defensive second base may field a ball hit in his vicinity as long as he or she maintains contact with the defensive second base. Only the batter-runner,



in this case, is eliminated. The ball is ruled dead. If there are other runners on base at the time, they must return to their respective bases before the next play can begin.

Runners at second base, and / or third base, are out when the sighted second base player firmly receives and controls the batted ball thrown from one of the five defensive players and prior to the batter-runner reaching second base safely.

If a ball batted in fair territory goes over the string between second base and the third base foul line on the FLY, the batter is automatically declared "OUT." This is for safety reasons and the ball is ruled dead. It's called a "FLY OUT." If there are other runners on base at the time, they must return to their respective bases.

Games are normally played in 7 to 9 innings.

### Chapter III. Basics of approaching potential blind athletes

Those who are looking forward to training visually impaired people will have to take into account not only the safety but also other important concepts that should be considered during interaction with future players:

- Trainers face a different awareness by players related to both understanding and implementing the lessons learned.
- People, who are going to learn the basics of Baseball for the Blind, have probably never played a sport and even fewer have practiced a team sport.
- You will have to be very patient in the early stages of teaching and most importantly you will have to explain accurately everything that needs to be done. You will have to help them overcome their fear of moving into spaces on the field following audible signals without the help of a cane and wearing a blindfold.
- However, you should consider that athletes who want to play Baseball for the Blind want to be treated like athletes, without agonizing or paternalism.
- We should not be surprised if we hear athletes saying "let me see" and we should not be afraid of saying it.