

“Negamco Plus” Baseball Cards

Negamco Baseball is a simple and quick board game that I find to be quite enjoyable to play. It has a few weaknesses, such as batters not being rated for walks, that I think are easy to fix. So, I created some player cards for use with the game (the game usually comes with roster sheets). They include some advanced rules that make up for some of the deficiencies, but still retain the ease of playability of the game.

I think that with these few simple ratings and rules, Negamco Baseball is right up there with a lot of other games in terms of ease of play, enjoyability and realism. The cards are in an Excel spreadsheet, and they print out quite nicely at nine cards per page on any printer that I have used. It might be best to use the "Print Preview" option before you print them out, so that you can see what they will look like.

I am not sure why I chose 1969 National League for my first attempt at this. It is a good season, with the miracle Mets and the first time that the Major leagues played in Canada. Also, there are quite a few solid Hall-of-Famers like Aaron, Mays, Banks, Clemente...

If you don't own Negamco Baseball, copies are available in mint condition on E-bay from Big League Game Company.

My additions to the game are:

Walk and strikeout ratings for batters

The hitters' walk and strikeout ratings are straightforward to use - simply add or subtract the batter's rating from the pitcher's walk or strikeout number before determining a walk or strikeout.

Pitcher's ratings for home runs allowed

The pitcher's home run rating (PHR) is a little more difficult to use. Use the PHR table in the Excel file to determine the batter's final home run rating before checking the home run chart. The batter's original home run rating appears in the left hand column. Add or subtract the pitcher's PHR rating from this number to determine the final home run rating that you use on the home run chart.

Example: batter's home run rating is 9h, pitcher's PHR is -3. 9h on the PHR chart is number 9. Applying the pitcher's PHR gives you 6. 6 on the PHR chart is 10, so batter's final home run rating against this pitcher is 10. This might seem a bit cumbersome when you first use it, but after a while it becomes quite routine.

When using this chart, I like to use the rule that the batter's PHR can be no more than double its original number. For example, batter's home run rating is 12, pitcher's PHR is +4. Instead of moving to 6 and giving the batter a home run rating of 10, I only move to 4, and make him an 11. This rule is optional, but I find that it keeps the weak home run hitters from hitting too many homers over the course of a season.

Stolen bases and base running

The cards include two running ratings: one for steals (SBA) and one for running the bases (RBA).

The stolen base method is essentially that adopted by BLM in the 1970's. Each runner has two ratings for his SBA. The first is his chance to get a jump, and the second is his success chance. For example, a runner on first has an SBA rating of 15/31, and you want to attempt a steal of second. You might have to spin twice: if the first spin falls between 1-15, then the runner gets a jump, and can attempt to steal. If the number is 16-50, no steal attempt. If the jump is successful, then spin again. The runner is safe if the second spin is 1-31.

For steals of third, subtract 5 from both numbers. For steal of home, subtract 10 from the first number and 15 from the second. (These rules are pretty arbitrary: feel free to change them if you like after you play a

few games.)

Use the runner's RBA rating with the stretch chart on base hits. When doing these ratings, I found that there were too many fast pitchers, so I reduced the pitcher's ratings by one category.

A note about the batting ratings

I produced the ratings using the methods included with the 1978 edition of the game. I had to adjust some of the batter's hitting ratings, because of the batter's walk ratings that are now included. If a batter walks a lot, then you have to reduce his batting letter to reproduce his proper batting average.

A note about the fielding ratings

When I was play testing these new rules and ratings, I found that I was getting too many errors. I tweaked the method for determining the fielding ratings, and I am getting much better results. For anyone who is familiar with the Negamco game engine, you know that simple changes may not be all that simple. All I know is that I am getting much better results with the fielding ratings that are given on these cards.

I have played about 50 games or so with these cards, and I am enjoying them quite a bit. I hope some other people will give them a try. If I ever find the time and gumption, I might try to do some more seasons.

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