

Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball FAQ/Strategy Guide

by VinnyVideo

Updated to v1.0 on May 11, 2009

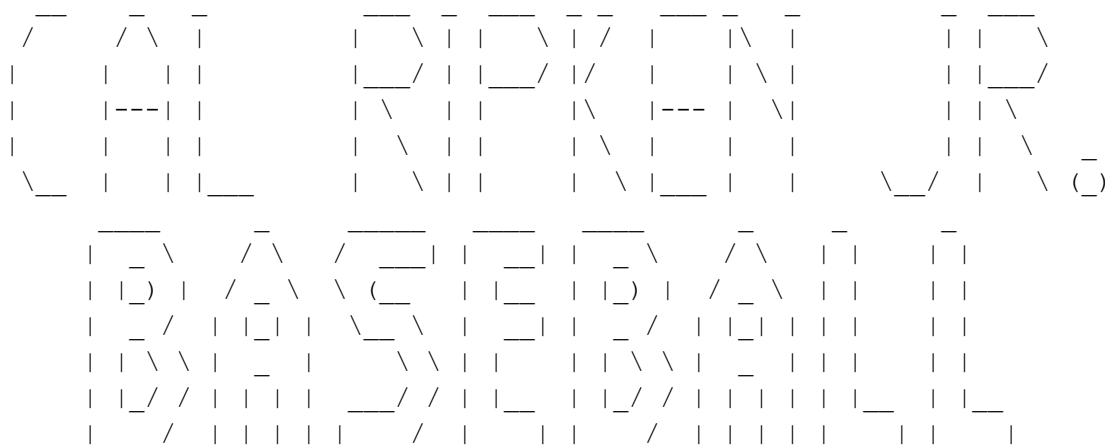


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Introduction [INTRO]

Wow... I went almost three weeks without working on a walkthrough! That's an eternity by my standards. I think I hit the Valley of Indifference there, possibly aggravated by the endless torrent of days that topped 90 degrees (Fahrenheit, of course) in my area. However, a quick glance at the Prolific FAQ Writers rankings showed that someone called IceQueenZero was about to pass me, and you know I can't let that happen. When you're 19th in the world (now better than that, I hope) in FAQ-writing, you've got a reputation to keep up! But all that was beside the main point of this walkthrough, which is to help you play an old baseball game better. As for my review of the game:

Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball, released in 1992, was one of the first baseball titles for the Super NES. There are only 16 teams, excluding all-star teams, and none of the players are real (although some players have real statistics, and a handful of the names resemble the real players'). The graphics aren't much better than an NES game, and all the players look alike. The cinemas that appear on close plays are kind of neat, although the first baseman looks as bulked-up as the average jockey. The background music on menus is OK, while the

in-game music is quiet and hard to notice. Sound effects aren't bad; the voices and bats sound satisfactory. Play control is typical of older baseball games, although fielding is tough because of the slow outfielders (even with their rocket arms). It would've been nice if the runners were a bit faster to counteract the amazing outfield arms; in all the games I've played, I've never tripled or allowed a three-bagger. Another irritant is that some pitchers can throw over 110 MPH, a mark no real pitcher has ever approached. Also frustrating is the fact that it's sometimes hard to tell the difference between ground balls and line outs, which occasionally causes you to get doubled off. The worst problem in Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball is you can't change lineups before games (except for choosing the starting pitcher). The AI isn't bad, though, since it will do things like bunt and steal occasionally. The computer's pitching tends to be predictable, though. The computer isn't incredibly hard to beat, although it can be difficult to score runs. You also won't give up many runs in this relatively pitcher-friendly game. An adjustable difficulty level would've been a plus. Overall, Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball is pretty typical Super NES baseball fare. There are other games that can do everything a little better than this, but since you probably got this game on the K-Mart clearance rack for a couple of dollars, it's a fair deal. And as always, playing with a friend (or enemy) is great.

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Gameplay Controls                                     [CONTR]
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Nothing too fancy here, but anyway:

---Any time---

START: Pause game

The pause menu allows you to make substitutions. It's also a good way to view player abilities.

---Hitting---

B: Swing the bat

A: Bunt

Control Pad: Change batter's position in batter's box

Control Pad Left/Right: Hold to angle bunt towards third or first, respectively

Y + Control Pad: Hold Y and press the corresponding Control Pad direction to increase the runner's lead off the base or steal a base

---Pitching---

B: Throw the pitch

Control Pad Left/Right: Change pitcher's position on the mound

Control Pad Down/Up: Hold during pitch to throw changeup or fastball, respectively

SELECT: Change defensive shifts; use the Control Pad to cycle through different shifts, and press B to toggle between outfield and infield

Y: Go into overhead fielding mode for pickoffs

B + Control Pad: Throw over to corresponding base in overhead mode

Remember that you can use Left or Right on the Control Pad to make the ball curve during the pitch.

---Fielding---

Control Pad: Move fielder

Y: Change fielder under your control

A (without ball, moving): Dive/Jump

B + Control Pad (with ball): Throw to corresponding base (B + Left = third base, etc.)

---Baserunning---

Y + Control Pad: Advance to corresponding base (Y + Up to go from first base to second, for example)

B + Control Pad: Retreat to corresponding base (B + Right to go back to first when between first and second)

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Modes of Play [MODES]
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This game doesn't really have a lot of ways to play:

---Exhibition---

Play a game using the teams and stadium of your choice. You can play against the computer or against someone else, or you can even watch a computer-simulated game.

---League---

Play a lot of games here, and if you're on top of the division at the end of the season, you'll reach the playoffs and have a shot at the World Series. Of course, it'll take a long time to play through the full season, but thankfully, the game gives you a password after each game that allows you to resume your progress at a later time using the "Continue Season" option. This password will be filled in on the password entry prompt automatically if you don't turn off the Super NES between games. By the way, when you start a new season, the game allows you to pick your home stadium, although away games are played at other venues.

---Rosters---

This useful feature allows you to see a list of players for any team in the game. Much of this information is difficult to find in any one place. Be sure to take a good look at the player data for your favorite team.

---Options---

Here you can turn off music or sound effects, or choose between monaural sound (the default) and stereo. I think turning off "zoom windows" eliminates the cute little movies that appear on close plays.

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Strategies [STRAT]
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Here are some strategies used in various aspects of this game.

-----Baserunning-----

Stealing second base (and usually third base) isn't too tough with a speedy runner. To steal a base, hold the Y button before the pitch and press the corresponding Control Pad button a few times to increase your jump; for example, if you want the runner on first to steal, hold Y and press Up several times. Press the Control Pad direction a final time to take off running just as the pitcher turns his head. Don't go too far too early when stealing, or else you may get picked off. Remember you can turn back with B and the appropriate Control Pad direction if you take off running and don't like the way things are looking. When stealing, consider the runner's speed, as well as the opposing catcher's arm strength; you might not want to risk stealing against a strong-armed catcher. Also, it's often extremely easy to steal when the pitcher is tired or otherwise can't throw very hard.

If you become overzealous in taking extra bases, you may end up getting caught in a rundown; when that happens, just turn back and you shouldn't get caught. While you're in a rundown, it's sometimes possible for other runners to advance

an extra base, depending on the situation, since the computer fielders always go for the lead runner, even when it defies common sense.

Be careful on fly outs and line outs. As soon as the ball is hit, the computer will send your runners toward the next base. However, if the ball is caught, the baserunners can be doubled off if you don't return them to their original bases. Use B and the respective Control Pad direction to turn back before the ball is caught. Of course, you can throw caution to the wind when there are two outs. Also watch out on certain fly balls, since the runners may not advance fully to their bases if the computer thinks the ball is going to be caught. One of the biggest problems in this game that line outs often look like ground balls - something that will cause you to get doubled off every once in a while.

Go for the extra base only when you're pretty sure you can succeed. Runners are pitifully slow, and even though outfielders also lumber around, they have unbelievable arm strength. Doubles are rare, and I've never even come close to getting a triple.

Only try to get extra bases through sacrifice flies when the ball was hit pretty hard, the runner is fast, or you know the outfielder has a weak arm.

-----Fielding-----

Like most baseball games, fielding in Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball is mostly a matter of learning the controls and anticipating how to position your fielders against certain kinds of hits. Ground balls are usually pretty easy to deal with. On fly balls, pay close attention to the map of the field, and position your fielder where the ball is going to land, based on the ball's angle. If necessary, use B to dive or jump (the computer decides between the two), and if you make a mistake, press Y to control a different fielder. Jumping requires good timing, but it's useful on high balls. Most outfielders are very slow, but their arms are amazing.

Even if you think you've got the ball on a fly out, be ready to throw to first just in case the ball bounced.

Computer fielders sometimes take care of outfield flies. If another player gets the ball, you take control of that fielder.

Hard dribblers to the first baseman can be tricky. Usually it's best to run over and step on first for the out, but if the 1B lacks speed, it might be easier to throw to the pitcher and let him cover the bag. Don't throw too late, though, or the runner may be called safe.

Foul pop flies are commonplace in this game, so always chase after them in pursuit of the possible out. This includes foul balls behind the plate, although occasionally the ball goes too far and the game won't let your catcher go past a certain point to make the F-2 play.

-----Hitting-----

First, feel free to swing away. The vast majority of the pitches thrown by computer opponents are down the middle, although that's not to say that the CPU will never throw a sharp curve or a ball (walks are extremely rare, though). Never swing at bad pitches, because if you don't make square contact with the ball, you'll hit a weak popup or foul ball. Also, REALLY bad inside pitches can give you a free ticket to first thanks to the occasional hit batsman.

When the opposing pitcher sets up on either side of the mound, it's wise to move your batter accordingly. It's best to stay near the inside part of the plate, since that's where the ball will usually go. Stay back in the batter's box to increase the likelihood of hitting a ground ball; stand closer to the pitcher to make fly balls more likely. Keep this in mind in certain situations, like situations where the hit-and-run may be expedient.

Remember the game's umpire is pretty generous when you check your swing, so if a pitch appears to be heading off the plate, you can change your mind at the last fraction of a second.

I haven't had much luck bunting for a hit, even with fast guys who bunt well. Sacrifice bunting can work, though, with a little practice. Remember that if you don't like the way the pitch is looking, you can release the button and avoid getting called for a strike. Also keep in mind the fact that you can aim your bunt toward the corresponding foul line by holding Left or Right on the Control Pad. Sacrifice bunting is most successful when you have the runners moving when you bunt; in fact, when runners are moving, even the batter may be safe. Usually you're most likely to bunt fair when you stand a bit forward in the batter's box (give Up a little tap). And whatever you do, please don't bunt with two strikes.

Here's a good way to gain an easy base, usually by bunting: With a fast runner on second (and other bases empty), bunt, immediately send the man on second toward third, then turn back to second when the pitcher throws to third. If you're lucky, the batter will be ignored and will thus reach base safely.

Sacrifice flies are not recommended because of the risk of runners getting doubled off. Hit-and-run plays are useful only with slow runners. Squeeze bunts, however, are great.

-----Management-----

In this game, you have a lot of flexibility as to where you play people, as any player can play any position. Unfortunately, you can't change the lineups before the start of games, so the only way you can change the lineup is by making substitutions. That's a shame, because the default defensive lineups don't always optimize performance at each position.

There's a moderate difference between player abilities in this game.

The game will let you start a pitcher every day in season mode, although I often use a rotation of two or three pitchers.

Use pinch-hitting and pinch-running to your advantage, even though every team in this game uses the DH, regardless of league.

-----Pitching-----

Make sure to keep an eye on your pitcher's energy level. If you start getting hit hard, it may be time to bring in a new hurler. The longer a pitcher pitches, the more his velocity and control will decline and the less motion he'll have in his breaking balls. Also remember that pitchers who have a low "Fatigue" rating will need to be pulled sooner than a more durable pitcher. The Fatigue rating is a rough guide for the number of innings you can expect to get out of a pitcher; for example, a pitcher with a Fatigue rating of 6 should last approximately six innings. Results may vary.

I find alternating between sides of the plate can be very effective in fooling hitters, especially the computer. Against a human player, fastballs followed by a changeup can be a great way to catch your opponent off guard.

One of the most effective pitches in this game is the slow curveball; hold Up during the windup to throw a slow pitch, then use Left or Right on the Control Pad to make the pitch curve sharply. In this game, slow balls from a fresh pitcher are usually harder to hit than fastballs. Use a little caution with sharp curves, though, since they can hit batters or result in a passed ball.

Another pitch that works great is a fastball to the opposite side of the plate as the hitter that curves inside at the last instant. This assumes the pitcher and batter are of different handedness.

An intentional walk may occasionally be worth considering if first base is empty and a particularly dangerous hitter is up, especially if the rest of the lineup is weak.

I wouldn't waste my time on pickoffs.

You may find it helpful to adjust the defensive shift when facing certain hitters. The deep outfield shift is rarely useful, but it's helpful to bring the infield in when the opposing hitter might bunt, and against weak hitters you might want to use a shallow outfield. Shifting to the left or right is seldom used. Remember that shifts remain in place until you change them (or until the game ends), so don't forget to change them back when appropriate.

Consider stamina when selecting relief pitchers. If it's the sixth inning, it's best to bring in a pitcher who can go a fairly long time. In the ninth inning, pick a closer who can't throw very long.

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Team Scouting Reports

[SCOUT]

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This is what the game says about each team under "Rosters." I preserve all the misspellings.

Detroit: Extremely powerful team. Little pitching to rely on, but with such brute force little pitching is needed.

Boston: Boston may have poor batting but when they get a runner on, they're a threat. They also have a good defense.

Baltimore: Well-rounded offensive attacks with a mighty punch from Cal Ripken Jr. Middle relief pitching is weak.

New York (A): All-around good team. Not particularly dominating in any one aspect, but they never give up.

Texas: Very high team batting average. Consistent on-base percentage and a steady defense.

Minnesota: Pitching staff speaks for itself. Relies on their almost invincible [sic] defense to support a weak offense.

Oakland: Likes to hit the ball deep and often. Mediocre pitching. Defense is above average.

Chicago (A): Strong in both offense and pitching. Weaknesses include their bench and defense.

St. Louis: Great hitting and speed. Pitching is shakey [sic], but aggressive [sic] baserunning and hitting make up for it.

Pittsburgh: One of the best defensive teams and a very effective pitching staff. Relatively weak hitting.

New York (N): Exceptional pitching with two good starters and a key stopper. Batting [is] average with a power bench.

Chicago (N): Above average batting with lots of power. Pitching slightly below average, but strong defense.

Cincinnati: Has an explosive offense. Weak pitching and obvious lack of speed, but can hit the long ball at any time.

Los Angeles: The combination of great team batting and defensive skills results in a bench that rarely sees any action.

Atlanta: Well-balanced team with good power, fairly good speed and a solid defense. Pitching staff is perhaps the best.

San Francisco: Very diversified strong points. Average power, but strong starting pitching keeps them in most games.

All-Stars: This is the best of the American divisions. This team uses its strong hitting to make up for its defense.

MVP's: This is the best of the National divisions. They are very strong defensively, but don't have the hitting.

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Frequently Asked Questions

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[QUEST]

Q: Are there any secret teams in this game?

A: Yep. In Exhibition mode, hold L and R and press Start while highlighting any team on the team selection screen. This lets you play using the All-Cal's Team, which has Cal Ripken clones at every position (including pitcher), which means you'll be hitting a LOT of home runs. This team doesn't have a scouting report, by the way.

Q: What team should I use?

A: If you want to boost your chances of winning, use one of the stronger teams, like the Braves, Dodgers, or an all-star team. If you're in the mood for a challenge or you're playing a less experienced human player, pick a weaker club like the Reds, or use a less-skilled pitcher.

Q: Does anything special happen if you throw a perfect game?

A: No.

Q: Are there real players in this game?

A: Except for Cal Ripken Jr., no. However, most (but not all) of the fictional players' stats correspond to the numbers of a real player who played Major League Baseball in 1992. I don't feel like taking the time to track down all the player stats through my copy of The Baseball Encyclopedia, but you can probably figure many of them out yourself by using The Baseball Encyclopedia, Baseball-Reference.com, MLB.com, or any source of historical stats. Some of the players are easy to figure out because of their resemblance to the names of actual players, like Bob Stocks (Barry Bonds), Frank Julio (Julio Franco), Ryan Noles (Nolan Ryan), Ryan Sands (Ryne Sandberg), Ozzy Wizard (Ozzie Smith), and others.

Q: How can I tell apart the New York and Chicago teams?

A: There are two teams each in New York and Chicago, and since this game doesn't have team nicknames or logos, you might have trouble telling the difference between each pair. The logo with the cloud blowing the wind is the Cubs, while the White Sox are represented by a baseball bat. As for the New Yorkers, the team with the Big Apple logo is based on the Mets, and the Yankees have the Statue of Liberty torch logo.

Q: Which venue is which?

A: The melodiously-named Hemphill Park is an old generic Astroturf venue modeled after Veterans Stadium and all those other ugly ballparks that looked alike. Maxwell Field is similar to Wrigley Field and has natural grass. The Thomson Dome is an indoor stadium with artificial turf. All have slightly varying dimensions.

Q: How does natural grass play differently from Astroturf?

A: Not that differently, although artificial turf is just a little bit faster.

Q: What does the "SDT" mean on the scoreboard at the end of the game?

A: Singles, doubles, and triples. The rest should be easy to figure out.

Q: What do "LO," "LS," "RO," and "RS" mean next to the pitchers' stats?

A: The first letter indicates whether the pitcher is right- or left-handed. I don't know about the "O" and "S" part.

Q: Can you make trades in this game?

A: No. You can't change the rosters in any way.

Q: How far have you gotten in the season?

A: I used the Cubs to get to complete nine games in season mode. I'm on top of the N.L. East division with an undefeated record, but I'm not planning on trying to win the World Series. My latest password is GHKNJHMJJHGJJNHJGKD.

Q: What other miscellaneous notes do you have?

A: A few random notes:

- * Statistics are based very loosely on 1991 numbers and early 1992 rosters.
- * The 16 regular teams in this game are the top four teams in each division in 1991, except that Milwaukee and Philadelphia are replaced by both New York teams, Cincinnati replaces San Diego, and Cal Ripken Jr.'s weak Baltimore team replaces the World Series champion Toronto.
- * I don't know if this game has a "mercy rule" that ends the game when a team drops behind by ten runs, since I've never had a game that lopsided.
- * My game once froze up, forcing me to reset. This occurred on an unusual bunting situation.

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Comparing to Reality [REALL]
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The 1992 Major League Baseball season featured the first world championship for a team outside the United States. The Toronto Blue Jays beat the Atlanta Braves in the World Series, where Dave Winfield made a memorable hit in extra innings in Game 7 to lead the Blue Jays to their first title.

In August, rumors surfaced that the San Francisco Giants would be sold and would then move to St. Petersburg. This did not happen, as we know.

In September, commissioner Fay Vincent was forced to resign after introducing many unpopular plans, especially his proposition of realigning the Cubs and Cardinals into the National League West division.

Cubs second baseman Ryne Sandberg was the highest-paid player in baseball, earning a contract worth \$7,000,000 per season. Nowadays, middle relievers often get paid that much!

Cubs pitcher Greg Maddux began his streak of four consecutive Cy Young Awards, while Dennis Eckersley won both the A.L. Cy Young and MVP. As for more obscure feats, Mickey Morandini turned a rare unassisted triple play in September.

1992 wasn't a great year for young talent, where utility man Pat Listach and longtime Dodgers first baseman Eric Karros won Rookie of the Year Awards. It was even worse for pitchers; one could argue that the period from 1990-1997 was the driest time for rookie pitchers in baseball history.

Version History

[VERSN]

Date	Version	Size	
5- 9-09	0.5	24KB	Began guide. Did the title art and review, as well as a lot of other stuff.
5-10-09	0.95	28KB	Finished team scouting reports and finished general strategies. Proofread and formatted guide.
5-11-09	1.0	29KB	Added the secret team.

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Contact Information

[CONTC]

If you have any questions or comments about this guide, please send an e-mail to VHamilton002@gmail.com. That's zero-zero-two, by the way. Remember that not all e-mail messages will be read. Please follow these guidelines:

Do include "Cal Ripken" in the subject line.
Do send polite suggestions for ways to make this walkthrough better.
Do tell me about any errors or omissions you find in this guide.
Do send information about any glitches, tricks, or codes you discover.
Do ask any questions you have about Cal Ripken Jr. Baseball gameplay. I will respond eventually if you follow all of these rules.
Do make a reasonable effort to use decent spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization so I can understand what you're trying to say.
Do use patience. I check my e-mail quite sporadically, and replies may take a week or even longer.
Do not send spam, pornography, chain letters, "flaming," or anything that contains profanity or vulgarity. Again, violating this rule will result in deletion of the message and permanent constipation.

And lastly, a public service message: Fight for and affirm the rights of all humans, regardless of race, age, or creed! And... Say no to anabolic steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. No one's likely going to read this, anyway.

For Mom

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