

Who's On First

A Baseball Guide to Grotto

Written By: Joshua Anderson
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Introduction

When watching a baseball game you see 9 players on the field, a batter, with maybe a few runners on base. But, have you considered the secondary players and personnel that make the teams successful? The coaches, the bench staff, the umpires, or the front office staff. Without these people, that team on the field may not exist or be successful.

So what does that have to do with the Grotto? Simple, like a baseball team there are the players you see and the personnel that may not be as obvious. Regardless of how big or small your Grotto is, there are roles to be played and like in baseball, sometimes the players involved get shifted to different positions.

Positions and Players

For this discussion we are going to combine a few of the positions in baseball, just like you may see multiple people filling a single position in your Grotto or a single person filling multiple positions in a game. Here is a quick look at each position from a baseball and a Grotto perspective.

Hitting and Fielding

When playing baseball you have the defensive side, the players in the field, who are taking part in the plays of the game. Then you have the offensive side, the batters and baserunners, who are trying to score hits and runs. In Grotto these two actions are not easily distinguished, but the analogy of pitching, making plays, hits, and runs still works.

Hitting

Hits are the successes that your Grotto wants to achieve. These successes may be as simple as getting members to return to meetings, filling the officer line completely without problems, or getting a mailing out on time. Then when the successes start to be larger, when those hits turn into triples, you may be looking at scoring a run.

A run in baseball is the points you accumulate so that you can win the game. In Grotto, a run is the successful event that furthers your Grotto in a recognizable fashion. Initiating a new Prophet is a run for every Grotto. But, for some Grottoes a run may just be having a red tassel be elected to Monarch, or even having enough present for quorum. Runs are not the same for all Grottoes, they will vary depending on individual circumstances. Homeruns, those are the runs that are worth a note in your Grotto's history.

Hitting a homerun in Grotto is something special. For an individual Prophet a homerun could be progressing through the line to be Monarch, or getting petitions signed. For a Grotto, a homerun could be successfully doing a full form ceremonial, increasing membership 10% in a year, hosting a successful fund raiser, or some other large and noteworthy event in the history of that Grotto.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Baseball Job</u>	<u>Grotto Role</u>
Outfielders	Be a backup to the infielders, catch fly balls, and stop homeruns	Helps with long term events, helps maintain the status quo
Shortstop and Second Base	React quickly to hits, cover for each other, relay for the out	Reacts quickly to suggestions, proposes and acts on ideas without committees
First Base	Quick reacting, holds the runner close, ready to take relay from other players	Always present, steps up when needed, consistent
Third Base	Quick to react, defensive minded, can play close to home	Quick to react in a crisis, fights to keep things from changing
Catcher	Involved in every play, calls the pitches, speaks with umpires	Always helping out, often dictates the next move, involved with other bodies/power players
Pitcher	Sets the pace of the game, takes credit for wins, face of the team	Helps set the calendar, takes credit when events are good, often most recognizable member by outsiders

Fielding

Fielding is the essential defense in baseball; trying to prevent the other team from scoring runs and winning the game. What are the runs you are trying to stop as a Grotto defenseman? You are trying to stop apathy, loss of membership, and the decline of the fraternity. The tools used are the pitches thrown and the plays made on the field.

The pitches thrown in Grotto are the plans and events that each Grotto puts on. Whether they are the idea of the Monarch, another officer, a Prophet, or just tradition, these are the events that can lead to hits and runs. Balls and strikes are a part of pitching, and the other team making contact with the ball is all bound to happen.

Balls and strikes are the good and bad parts of setting up anything in the Grotto. The successful meeting or planning session is a ball if you look from the standpoint of making it on base and scoring runs. But, the same is a strike if you look at it as preventing the other team from getting on base. It is a matter of perspective on how balls and strikes are assessed.

A fun way to look at setting up an event is to look at it as setting up a great double play in baseball. All parts of the team working together to relay the ball, covering the bases, and syncing up to get the outs.

Creating a Team

There is one important lesson that should be noted immediately when looking to create a Grotto team. That lesson is that the player positions in baseball **DO NOT** correspond necessarily with officer positions in the Grotto. The positions are descriptions of how people react and the roles that they fill in doing things within your Grotto. With that said, let's discuss the makeup of a good team.

Pitcher

The pitcher is a visible face, someone who leads and sets the tone of the Grotto. This is a role that is often filled by someone who takes credit for successes but will also tend to deflect criticism to the rest of his team mates. Do not assume this is the Monarch, there is a good chance that the Monarch is not the one making the pitches in your Grotto, setting the agenda.

A Grotto needs at least one pitcher; two or three isn't bad either. A baseball team will often have 10 pitchers on a 25 man roster. But, with too many pitchers you run the risk of ego clash and not enough others to complete the plans that are pitched out there.

Catcher

In baseball the catcher often calls that pitches, is involved with every play, and is usually very consistent. In the Grotto,

the catcher is the guy that is always involved, who seems to be present at every event, and also tends to direct a lot of what is happening in the Grotto.

The Catcher can be a position of positive or negative influence in a Grotto. The catcher can be positive in supporting new ideas and ideas that may help the Grotto to grow. But, the catcher can also use his influence to downplay and limit these same ideas to the detriment of the Grotto.

A Double Play of Team Work

A long hard fly ball is hit by the idea to put on a full form ceremonial. The outfielders see the ball in the air and start jogging to make the catch, they have the time to adjust to the balls flight and move to meet it. As the outfielder is making his move, the runner named "We Can't" is making the move from first to second base while the hitter "Old Ways" is jogging towards first. As the outfielder makes the catch he bobbles the ball trying to throw it to the cutoff man. But, another outfielder is there to make the grab and fire it in. The short stop grabs the throw, as the second baseman reacts to the change and quickly moves to cover the base as the building committee announces a problem with the hall for the event. "We Can't" makes a head first slide towards second base just as the second baseman makes the adjustments for the hall issues and fires the ball over to first. The first baseman is there, with glove outstretched, knowing that the ball is coming, patiently waiting for the others to need him, and in one smooth motion he grabs catches the throw just before "Old Ways" can safely touch first.



First Baseman

The first baseman is someone who is consistently there, always ready to be called on to help in a play, or cover when someone is out of position. For the Grotto, the first baseman is someone that can react quickly to changes, can be called on at anytime to help out, and is ready to step up if needed.

Often this position is a past Monarch. Someone who has a love of the Grotto and is most likely emotionally invested in it will fill this position. Multiple people filling this role is a good thing, as long as the passions that they have do not conflict with each other.



Second and Short Stop

The position of second base and shortstop are identical for our purpose. In baseball they are quick reacting, covering for each other, speedy players. For the Grotto, these positions are quick to react to suggestions, when an idea is proposed (theirs or someone else's) they want to see immediate action taken on it, the use of committees and further meetings is often discouraging for them.

These are also the people that can be given something and allowed to run with it, if the caveat that perfection is not guaranteed is understood. A few of these people in your Grotto is useful, they can take something that is time critical and get it done when needed, but when details are important you may need to ask the first baseman to step up and help them.

Third Base

In baseball the third baseman has to be quick to react to a hit, but be mindful that he is the last defense before the runner is making the break for home plate. For the Grotto, the third baseman is that Prophet who can react quickly to a crisis, can deal with that hard hit ball to prevent a disaster from befalling your Grotto. But, at the same time he is highly defensive, to the point of resisting change in the Grotto, even when the change would be for the better.

Every Grotto needs at least one person in this role, someone that can react to the crisis in a manner that is in the best interest of the Grotto. The risk is that you get too many of these players who are strong on the defensive side, which puts your Grotto at risk of never making a great play.



Outfielders

A baseball outfielder is that lone guy standing out in the middle of the grass by himself. In the Grotto, it may look like he is alone out there, always pushing for longer term plans and pushing to maintain the balance in the Grotto. But, he is not alone. There are other outfielders playing too.

The outfielders you have both in baseball and Grotto will cover and assist each other most of the time. More outfielders is a good thing for a Grotto, as long as their desire to maintain the status quo does not become a desire to resist change for the Grotto that may be beneficial.

Setting the Lineup

The members of your Grotto are your teammates. To some extent the ability is there to improve your team and make roster moves to improve a weak position.

These moves are by developing the members you already have as well as by recruiting new members. Every player (in other words every Prophet) can help build the lineup, can help to improve the pool of players that you can use.

As you build up your membership you are recruiting from other Masonic bodies and the blue Lodges, which are your minor leagues. If you see a member elsewhere who would be beneficial to the Grotto do what you can to draft them into the Grotto.

With a strong pool of players you will find most if not all of the roles filled. Understand that each position is important for its own purposes, but that they all have weaknesses and can be detrimental at the same time.

If you have a bunch of short stops, do you need to consider maybe recruiting more outfielders to balance out the quickness with a more long term view? Do you have an exceptionally strong catcher who runs things, not allowing the pitchers to throw their best stuff?

When you are aware of what you do and do not have in your Grotto an effort can be made to fill the positions or addresses the weaknesses/risks of each position.

Managing Your Grotto Team

The part of baseball we want to talk about deals with the non-players of baseball, but still the power players of the team and the game. These are the coaches, owners, and umps. These three groups are found in the Grotto too, but with slightly different purposes.

Let's start with the coaches, which some Grottoes lack. In baseball, a coach helps players to improve their game. They are the ones that help



players adjust their swing, improve fielding skills, or help to select the pitches to be thrown. Good coaches in the Grotto help the new officers learn their duties, help the new Prophet to learn about the Grotto, and help by giving constructive advice to those planning activities. A coach is not necessarily the Monarch or even a past Monarch, but is simply someone with knowledge and a willingness to help others. Position players can be coaches, and often times are.

Owners of a baseball team are the ones that set the payroll and make high level decisions for the team. For the Grotto, the owners are the ones who truly control the happenings in a Grotto. This could be a group of people, a clique of individuals, or even one very powerful personality. These groups have seemingly limitless power within your Grotto. Many would say that this is the officer line or a board of trustees of some sort, but is that the reality? The argument can be made that the real power of the owner should not reside in the officers, a board, or an individual; but instead the power of the owner should be invested with the membership as a whole. This is a noble idea, though personalities of individuals will make it all but impossible to be truly implemented. Instead, consider who the owners of your Grotto are and ask if that is where it should be for the greater good of the Grotto.

The final part we want to discuss is the umps. Baseball fans may have fun making fun of the umps and heckling them, but they serve the important purpose of making sure everyone adheres to the rules and plays fair. For the Grotto, our umps are District Deputies and the Supreme Council. The deputies help to ensure each Grotto is sticking to the rules, while the Supreme Council is calling the overall game that all Grottoes are a part of. When disputes arise or close plays at the plate occur, these umps are tasked with making the call.



Taking the Field

Now that we have looked at the various parts of a team, the roles each position plays, and less obvious ump's and support staff, we can now get out there and start playing our own game of Grotto baseball. As you work within your Grotto look at the players on your team, and ask yourself if you can identify the positions they are playing.

Looking at the team mates you have will give you an idea of what may be needed to improve your Grotto, or what may be a good fit for a member that is showing an interest in being involved. Do you need the long term planning outfielder because you have too many second basemen? Or, do you need more steady always ready to help first basemen, when you have a lot of pitchers throwing ideas?

And do not forget, the one position we never spoke of, the bench warmer. The bench warmer is that member who never shows, never gives input, never seems interested. Is this because the other players are not giving him a chance to be a contributing member to the team? Could it be that his skills are just not apparently needed in the Grotto? You may need to play the role of coach to find out why this person is a bench warmer, get to know them and what they want so that they can be fit into the lineup.

Every member of the Grotto should be an active player, no one should be a benchwarmer. The District Deputies and the Supreme Line officers are not just ump's, but players in their own Grottoes too. Everyone is a player in this great game of Grotto Baseball. So get ready, the first pitch of the game is about to be thrown...Play Grotto!



PLAYER ACTIVITY

My Grotto Team

Take a few minutes and think about the guys at your Grotto. Now ask yourself if your Grotto was a baseball team, who would fill the positions. If Hitting, Fielding, and Homeruns are different aspects of being in the Grotto, what would the stats be for each player?

Now that you have thought about it, try to fill in the lineup card for your Grotto Team.

Lineup Card

<i>Position</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Batting Average</i>	<i>Fielding Percentage</i>	<i>Homeruns</i>
Pitcher				
Catcher				
First Base				
Second Base				
Third Base				
Short Stop				
Left Field				
Center Field				
Right Field				
Designated Hitter				