

Attorney Peter Meltzer Answers the Questions Real Baseball Fans Want to Know

Can a pitcher be credited with striking out a batter he did not face? What is a reverse force double play? Is it possible for a fielder to be called for obstruction even if he is nowhere near the runner?

These are the questions that trouble armchair umpires like Peter E. Meltzer, author of "So You Think You Know Baseball? A Fan's Guide to the Official Rules." Meltzer, 54, is a partner at Weber Gallagher, where he is a commercial litigator.

His book, published by W.W. Norton & Company, will be released June 10. Kirkus Reviews calls it "a lively, enlightening trip through the baseball rule book" that will help fans grasp "why the rules are so central to the game's past, present and future."

Mr. Meltzer has been a baseball fan for as long as he can remember. "The rulebook is a tricky document which is not self-explanatory," he said. "I decided to create a guide for fans that illustrates all the provisions in the rulebook relying on actual Major League plays which have occurred. I believe that this is a much more entertaining and informative way of teaching fans about the rulebook, as opposed to inventing dry hypothetical situations."

To write the book, Mr. Meltzer, a Phillies fan, studied the rulebook intently and worked with several experts for three years delving into all the nuances and variations.

"Baseball has more of a tradition than any other major sport," Mr. Meltzer said. "Baseball has a rich history of capturing every aspect of the performance of every player ever since the game began. As for the rules, the absence of a clock gives fans the chance to digest and analyze what is happening on the field. The idea of memorializing the performance of each player as the game is going on is unheard of in other sports."

Mr. Meltzer is also the author of "The Thinker's Thesaurus," and "So You Think You Know The Presidents?"