

MUSTANG DIVISION - NATIONAL LEAGUE

GOVERNING RULES AND PHILOSOPHY

It is the belief of PONY ("Protect Our Nation's Youth") Baseball, and Irvine Pony Baseball Association ("IPBA") specifically, to offer all youth who desire to be play organized baseball the opportunity to fulfill this aspiration. IPBA offers many different types of play to provide as many options as possible to assist in the development of young players, and to make sure the players have fun. The IPBA believes that participating in an organized youth baseball program will implant positive attributes of sportsmanship, teamwork, self-reliance, discipline and most of all self esteem. Most importantly, PONY Baseball and its founders believe that this participation should be a family affair.

There are a myriad of opportunities for parents to volunteer in support of their children's team or the league as a whole, and to support their children at the field level. PONY Baseball, and IPBA specifically, is built on experience and direction from its volunteer parents, leaders and appointed board members. From this group of community pioneers we can learn how to build sportsmanship and take this guidance to the roots of our everyday lives.

PONY Baseball is regulated by the official rules of baseball as stated in The Sporting News edition. These rules are amended by PONY Baseball Rules as listed in the most recently published official handbook. Due to local circumstances, these rules have been amended at the regional and local level as approved by the division Vice President and rules committee. The regional and local modifications are set forth below.

1.0 ROLE OF MANAGERS, COACHES AND PARENTS – PLAYER CONDUCT

- 1.1 Managers and Coaches should realize that they are role models for the players, and that the players tend to emulate all actions, positive or negative.
- 1.2 All actions of the coaches and parents are the sole responsibility of the team manager. Any outbursts, foul language, confrontations from any member of organized play while on a PONY Field will not be accepted. Inability of the team manager to control the conduct of coaches, team members or their parents will be termed an infraction, and can result in discipline, including but not limited to removal of the manager from his position. If a manager feels he needs assistance, he should not hesitate to contact the league commissioner.
- 1.3 The umpire is the final decision-maker in all cases. **Umpires judgment calls are final and cannot be changed MLB rule 9.02(a).**

Managers may ask for time and when time is granted they are allowed to discuss rulings on the field. Here are some examples of what is allowed and what isn't. Asking why a balk was called, why obstruction or interference was called, etc. all of these are perfectly OK to question. Out and safe, fair or foul may be discussed on a limited basis. Discussing and/or arguing balls and strikes is not allowed MLB rule 9.02(a) Comment.

If a discussion is to take place, it will only be with the team manager or, in his absence, the lead coach in attendance at the game (as indicated on the game roster). Only a manager may ask for a meeting with the umpire to discuss an issue on the field. The Team Manager will call for time and walk to meet the umpire away from the fans and players.

Assistant coaches may only speak to umpires through the team manager unless asking for general information (ball/strike count, outs etc.) Any raised voices; outbursts of anger, parent intervention, or other team misconduct will be treated as an infraction if

not immediately taken care of by the team manager. If the team manager is the source of un-sportsmanlike conduct, this will immediately be deemed an infraction and that manager will be ejected from the game.

- 1.4 Players are expected to attend practices and games. Players/Parents are expected to notify managers/coaches ahead of time if players cannot attend practices, games or other team activities. Many managers have team guidelines regarding practices and arrival time prior to games. Players are expected to comply with team guidelines. Managers have the right to discipline players in repeated violation of team guidelines, subject to approval of the division commissioner or VP. The opposing coach is to be notified if playing time is affected.
- 1.5 Players will be ejected from games for behavior deemed to be exceedingly unsportsmanlike or violent (e.g., throwing equipment in anger/frustration, verbally abusing other players/coaches or umpires, threatening other players, intentionally causing physical harm to anyone during a game or any other behavior deemed inappropriate by the game umpire or a PONY Board Member in attendance) Players ejected in this manner will be suspended for the following game their team plays as well. Continuous violations will lead to expulsion from the league.

2.0 OFFICIAL START TIME

- 2.1 A game shall start no later than ten (10) minutes after the scheduled time due to a team not having enough players to take the field defensively. A team must have a minimum of eight (8) players to constitute a complete team. If 8 players are not present when it is time to take the field defensively, the team with the shortage of players will forfeit the game. If 8 players are available, the game may be played. However, one out will be recorded every time the missing player was to bat. In addition, a team may start the game on offense with only seven (7) batters, but if the three outs are recorded or the eighth position comes up to bat and an eighth player has not yet shown up for the game, the team with seven players shall forfeit. A "home" team with only seven players has the option of becoming the visiting team to take advantage of the seven player rule, but only if the other team has at least nine (9) players. See farm team.
- 2.2 A game shall start no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time due to the absence of the umpire. If the umpire does not take his position within 10 minutes of the official start time, both managers must agree to play the game without an official umpire or reschedule the game. An un-biased person may be utilized as the umpire if both managers agree. If a volunteer is selected and the managers agree, this person will take their position behind the pitcher. The calls and decisions made by this person are to be accepted as valid and final. No disagreements or changes will be allowed once the decision has been made to use this person as the umpire. If the managers cannot agree on a neutral person, or choose not to play without an official umpire, the league commissioner must be notified as soon as practicable so that the game can be rescheduled.

3.0 LENGTH AND COMPLETION OF GAMES

- 3.1 Each game shall be six (6) innings or two hours fifteen minutes (2:15), whichever comes first. No new inning shall begin more than two hours (2:00) after the start of the game. At the discretion of the league, these time limits may be modified or removed for purposes of tournament or all-star play. To avoid confusion and disputes, the official scorekeeper shall record the start time of the game, using the umpire's watch or, if he has none, a timepiece agreed to by both managers.

- 3.2 Drop dead at 2 hours 15 minutes. If drop dead is called and the visiting team has the lead, the score reverts back to the last complete inning.

If it appears to the umpire that a team is purposely delaying the game to reach drop dead status, the umpire can decide to suspend the game after issuing one warning to the delaying team. In the event that the game is suspended, the Division VP will review the situation and determine if the game shall be forfeited or continued at a later date.

- 3.3 The 10 run mercy rule after 4 innings applies per Pony 11.G. This rule is in effect during playoffs and tournaments unless otherwise noted on the tournament rules sheet.
- 3.4 A complete game will be considered four innings. It will be up to the league to reschedule and finish any incomplete game. Time limitations do not apply until a game is considered a complete game
- 3.5 During regular season, games ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie. Extra innings are allowed subject to time limitations and both managers agreeing. Once extra innings are agreed to and played they will be considered official for purposes of the end result. Playoffs or tournaments cannot end in a tie.

4.0 GAME ROSTER

- 4.1 All drafted players must be listed on the game roster. If a player is absent or injured and not available to play, the roster must reflect this status.
- 4.2 All rosters must be given to the opposing manager and the home team scorekeeper prior to game time with the correct game line-up. Once the game has started no changes may be made to the line-up, except for late arrivals. Late arrivals must be placed at the bottom of the active batting order.
- 4.3 The official scorekeeper shall be the home team scorekeeper unless agreed upon differently by both managers. The official scorekeeper surrenders loyalty to either team and cannot offer or intentionally withhold information in order to create an advantage for either team MLB rule 10.0. This person needs to be designated by the home team each game and the umpire shall declare to both coaches and scorekeeper the official start time of the game to prevent disputes arising from poor communication.
- 4.4 A player who leaves before the end of a game

non-injury situation: an out will be recorded at that batters position in the batting order for the balance of the game, unless the manager has notified the opposing manager, umpire and the official scorekeeper at the beginning of the game **AND** the player has been put at the bottom of the batting order.

Injury situation: batters position in the batting order shall be counted as an out the first time he is unable to bat. Subsequent absences during scheduled batting appearance shall not be counted as outs.

- 4.5 The game roster must indicate the name of the manager or, in his absence, the lead coach.

5.0 BATTING

- 5.1 It is mandatory that all players in attendance at the start of the game shall be listed in the batting line-up and must be given the opportunity to bat, whether they are holding a field position or not in the inning in which they are scheduled to bat.

- 5.2 Batting out of order: An out may be recorded against the batter that missed his turn after an appeal is made to the umpire. An appeal can only be made after the improper batter has completed his at bat and before the next pitch or play. The improper batter may be replaced with the proper batter, anytime while at bat, without penalty **MLB rule 6.07**.
- 5.3 A batter is to be considered batting out of order if his leaving the game disrupts the lineup. When the missing player's position is scheduled to bat, an out will be recorded. If the player remains absent from the game, the player's spot in the batting order will be skipped with no further penalty. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if it is known prior to the start of the game that a player is going to leave the game prior to its completion, he must be placed as the last batter and his anticipated departure must be disclosed to the opposing manager. If this procedure is followed, an out will not be taken for lineup disruption.
- 5.4 Players who intentionally, in the judgment of the Umpire, throw bats or protective headgear, or discard protective headgear while batting or running the bases, may be ejected from the game following completion of any play in progress at the time the violation occurs. Such action does not constitute an out and such players shall be replaced as batters or base runners as required.
- 5.5 An INTENTIONAL WALK may be announced by the opposing manager. In this event the batter will be awarded first base and the pitcher will not be required to pitch 4 called balls.

6.0 PITCHING

- 6.1 Balks are governed by MLB rules.

Before April 1st: One warning will be given to each pitcher, by the umpire, before balks are enforced.

After April 1st: No warnings will be issued and balks will be called as such. Managers are encouraged to instruct pitchers on balks and how to avoid them.

- 6.2 The third strike uncaught rule (Dropped Third Strike) is in effect and is governed by **MLB rule 6.05(b)**.
- 6.3 Pitchers shall not pitch more than 3 innings in a game. If a pitcher pitches 3 innings, he must have 40 hours of rest before pitching again (time from the start of the first game). Pitchers are allowed a maximum of 6 innings per week (Monday-Sunday).). The calendar resets on Monday at 12:01 a.m. for purposes of this rule.
- 6.4 Once a pitcher has been removed from the mound, he may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.
- 6.5 Pitchers will be logged as having pitched one full inning should they do any one of the following:
- (i) throw warm-up pitches prior to the start of an inning whether or not they then pitch any pitches during the same inning.
 - (ii) Throw one or more pitches in any inning of play.

Exception: This rule does not apply to infield play in terms of Rule 8.4 i.e. if a pitcher throws less than a complete inning then this is not considered a complete inning for purpose of the infield play rule (see rule 8.4).

6.5 When a relief pitcher comes into the game he will be allowed eight warm up pitches. Existing pitchers are allowed five warm up pitches between innings. A relief pitcher that enters the game because of an existing pitcher's injury will be allowed as many warm up pitches as needed.

6.6 A pitcher must be replaced if he hits 2 batters in an inning or 3 batters total, regardless of number of innings pitched.

6.6 Pitchers are not permitted to throw curveballs.

It is the position of the Pony Board of Directors that throwing a curveball is hazardous to young player's health and will take disciplinary action on managers that allow them to throw that pitch. The Division VP will monitor games and get reports from umpires and fellow managers to determine if there has been a violation. Managers encouraging this type of pitch will not be considered for a coaching position in future seasons.

6.7 No player who is not league age 9 or 10, as determine by IPBA age rules, may pitch in any Mustang game.

7.0 BASE RUNNING

7.1 PONY rule 9.N.(1) shall apply (full stealing under normal baseball rules).

7.2 Players **must** slide or avoid contact with defensive players when approaching second, third or home plate. If a player fails to slide or avoid contact, in the opinion of the umpire, the base runner will be called out. If the failure of the player to slide or avoid contact disrupts a defensive play that would have resulted in another out, the umpire can call the other player out as well.

7.3 The catcher or other defensive player may not block any base or home plate without possession of the ball or be in the act of fielding the ball. The fielder will be guilty of obstruction as in **MLB rules 7.06(a)(b)**.

7.4 A runner may only attempt to steal home on a passed ball/wild pitch, on any play made by the defense on base runners or when the catcher releases the ball to any other player on the field. A runner at third may attempt to score on a pass ball or wild pitch.

7.5 Pinch runners may be used in the event of an injury to a player. In the case of an injury the player who recorded the last out will be used as a pinch runner for the injured player. This does not remove the injured player from the line-up and he may stay in the game and bat in the regular order and play a defensive position. If the injured player cannot return to his regular place in the batting order an out will not be recorded when his place in the order comes up the first time through the order (see rule 4.4). Courtesy runners for the pitcher and catcher are also allowed with two outs in an effort to speed up the game. The last recorded out will be the runner.

8.0 FIELDING

8.1 There are free substitutions at the half inning. Players should not be removed during an inning unless due to injury. Exception: pitchers. Defensive players on the field may be moved from position to position at the coach's discretion, as long as rules 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4 are not violated.

8.2 No player may sit out two innings in a row. Exception: an issue with discipline, in which case the manager must notify the opposing manager of his decision.

- 8.3 No player can sit out two innings in a game until every other player on his team has sat out at least one inning. Exception: discipline issues (see 8.2). This rule does not apply to tournament play (e.g. Memorial Day, All-Stars, etc).
- 8.4 Every player must play at least one complete inning in the infield within the first four innings. Pitching less than a complete inning does not constitute a complete inning of infield play for purposes of this rule.
- 8.6 The infield fly rule is in effect MLB rule 2.00.

Penalty (applies to rules 8.2, 8.3, 8.4): if it is found that a manager has inadvertently, or otherwise, violated any of rules 8.2, 8.3 and/or 8.3, the manager must immediately rectify the situation and it needs to be brought to the attention of the division commissioner. The affected player will swap with an unaffected infield player (no other defensive changes are permitted unless a pitching change is also made) and will play the remainder of the inning at that position. In addition, the affected player may not sit out for the remainder of the game unless additional innings are played at the end of 6 innings or whether doing so would result in a violation of rule 8.3. In terms of rule 8.4 the affected player must also play an additional complete inning at an infield position following the inning in which the violation of this rule occurred.

9.0 FARM TEAM

To avoid going to 8 players a farm system has been established. In order for this rule to take effect and be utilized without abuse the following rules will apply:

- 9.1 Only sanctioned and appointed teams by the commissioner may be utilized for farm team activity. Farm team for Mustang National League will be Mustang American League.
- 9.2 A manager may not go to a farm team unless the following criteria are in place:
- (i) the manager has reason to believe his team will fall to 9 players or less.
 - (ii) A Commissioner has been notified prior to game time for approval. If the commissioner is unavailable, the V.P. of the league must be notified. The commissioner has the final approval on the use of a farm team.
 - (iii) The opposing manager is notified 24 hours prior to game start time that you are using a farm team player and the names of your absent players. If rules for farm team usage are not adhered to, the manager must be notified by the opposing manager and corrective actions taken. If the situation is not corrected, the game will be forfeited by the team utilizing the farm advantage.
 - (iv) As many farm players as necessary to complete a 9 person roster may be acquired through the approved channels.
 - (v) The Commissioner is the only person other than the rules committee that may assign farm team status. This must be completed prior to the first scheduled league game.
 - (vi) It is to the advantage of all concerned to attempt to supply the most talented child available when you are asked to supply a farm team player. You must discuss this with your team parents and let them know this policy is being adopted. Most kids and parents really like the opportunity to play with another team as a farm player.
- 9.3 The farm player may be brought up only after confirmation that there will be no more than 10 players at the game. If an 11th player shows up prior to game time unexpectedly, the manager will discuss the situation with the child's parents and be sure that there is an understanding of commitment to game schedules. This child may play in the game, however, he/she will not be allowed to play more than every other inning for

the duration of the game. If a child shows up after the first pitch has been thrown and a farm player is in place, this child is not allowed to play for the duration of the game. Again, the child's parents need to be spoken with.

- 9.4 A farm player **must** play at the least every other inning. However, when the number of players on the team is 10, the team manager cannot play a farm team player more than anyone else on his roster. This is accomplished by rotating the farm player in and out every other inning.
- 9.5 The farm player **may not pitch** under **any** circumstances. In addition, he may not play the infield more than two consecutive innings.
- 9.6 The sole purpose of the farm team is to avoid recording an out when batting short and to compete evenly on defense, it is not to bring in ringers and high grade talent. The positions that are to be filled should be positions that will not upset your current roster.
- 9.7 The farm player(s) must be put at the bottom of the batting order ... no exceptions. Any unresolved infractions of the above stated rules will result in a game forfeiture.

10.0 ADDITIONAL PLAYING RULES

- 10.1 Two offensive time outs per inning are permitted. More than two timeouts will be considered a delay of game. Two such infractions will constitute an out. The batter at the plate at the time of the second infraction will take the out in the scorebook. An offensive timeout is considered to be taken when play is stopped by the team at bat for any reason other than injury or to fix equipment or a uniform.
- 10.2 Two defensive time outs per inning are permitted. On the second and subsequent timeouts the pitcher must be removed from the mound. A defensive time-out is considered to be taken when a coach/manager steps past the 1st and 3rd baseline and on to the field for any reason what so ever except injury or to fix a uniform. If there is any delay to the game because of a manager communicating to his pitcher directly, that too will be considered a time-out.
- 10.3 If a player leaves the field for any reason (i.e., bathroom break), the player may be replaced until they return. If a batter due up to bat is not available to bat for any reason other than verified injury (umpire's decision), that batter shall be called out. Managers may not bat around players who have left the field for any reason other than injury. See Rules Section 5.
- 10.4 A defensive player can be temporarily replaced for a bathroom break but will be called out if unavailable to bat in his turn while on offense. The umpire shall give approximately 60 seconds for a missing player to arrive at the batter's box ready to bat with all equipment (gloves / helmet / bat) fitted on and ready to go.
- 10.5 All players must wear a protective cup. Catchers must wear hard protective cup.
- 10.6 Metal cleats are not allowed.

11.0 PROTESTS

Protests are not allowed in this division

12.0 ALL-STAR SELECTIONS

- 12.1 All-Star selections for the National League shall be voted on by National League coaches, the league commissioner and the Vice-President of the Division.

- 12.2 Final nominations will take place prior to the Memorial Day Tournament and the team taking the field for that tournament will be formed using this information and a discussion by the National League coaches and commissioner. Final All Star Team will be formed after the Memorial Day Tournament. These nominations, and official league statistics (if available) will be used by the voting body to decide the players selected but are not controlling.
- 12.3 In creating each post season tournament team (All-Stars), the focus will be on creating the best team, and not necessarily selection of the best 12 players.
- 12.4 Selection of managers for all-star or tournament play will start with nomination by fellow coaches in the same league. Each manager will have one vote and cannot vote for. The commissioners have two votes each and may use them at their discretion. The Vice-President shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. The voting process should consider the candidate's:
- (I) coaching skills and baseball knowledge;
 - (ii) interpersonal skills with the players as well as the parents and umpires;
 - (iii) desire to play fair in all aspects of the game;
 - (iv) competitive strengths; and
 - (v) the coach's ability to work within the Irvine PONY system and philosophy.
- The voting process should not consider whether the candidate's child is selected for the team (the candidate may wish to manage even without his child being a part of the team). In addition, it should be kept in mind that the manager of the first or second place team in league play does not automatically make the manager the best for the position.
- 12.5 The All Star Coach and player selection is described in more detail in the Admin Plan. In all cases, the rules, methods and definitions detailed in the most current Admin Plan will prevail in all cases.