

RULES OF PLAY - PURPOSE - ALL MANAGERS MUST READ

The purpose of the following rules of play is to provide a structure for all games and to ensure uniformity of game conduct throughout the season. Additionally, these rules are provided to help managers and teams navigate through expected norms of behavior during the season. It is critical to keep in mind that in divisions with scoring and standings, though fair competition is encouraged, use or manipulation of the rules to obtain a specific competitive advantage is both frowned upon and antithetical to the spirit and purpose of PONY youth baseball both nationally and as conducted by the Newport Beach Baseball Association. Thus, every effort should be made to ensure fairness and these rules will be interpreted to maintain competitive balance and provide youth with the opportunity to maximize fair and equal playing opportunities.

MUSTANG

At this age we introduce leading off and stealing. Games are played with 60-foot base paths and a 46-foot pitching distance.

The following Rules are in addition to the basic baseball rules as contained in the MLB rule book and the Pony League rule book. In the event of a conflict, THESE Rules supersede:

1. GAME STARTS:

- a. The Manager or a Coach **MUST** have the team roster and the medical release forms for all players at each game.
- b. The home team is responsible for setting up the field before each game and supplying three (3) new approved baseballs.
- c. The visiting team shall have ten minutes of on-field practice beginning 25 minutes before the scheduled game time and the home team shall have ten minutes of on-field practice starting 15 minutes before game time. No batting practice on the field is permitted.

2. UNIFORM:

- a. Each player shall be permanently assigned a uniform number at the beginning of the season. A player's name may appear on the back of the jersey.
- b. No team shall make changes to the league issued uniforms without approval of the Division Coordinator. Player purchased pants should match the team's official colors or scheme as directed by the team's manager or by the Division Coordinator.

3. **COACHES IN THE DUGOUT:** Only the manager and up to two coaches are permitted in the dugout. No other parent shall view the game from or be present in the dugout during the game. Parents are spectators and should watch the game from the stands or a location other than the dugout.

4. BATTING ORDER:

- a. The batting order shall include all players on the team's roster present at the commencement of the game. Every player listed in the order will bat. No player shall occupy the last batting position in consecutive games.

- b. A legal lineup is no less than eight (8) players ready and able to play at the actual start of each game. A team may begin and continue to play with eight (8) players without forfeiting the game but must take an out **EACH** and every time the 9th batter's spot appears in the lineup. (Example: if two runners are on base and the eighth batter makes the second out of the inning, the inning then ends because the ninth spot in the lineup represents the third out). **A TEAM MUST HAVE AT LEAST EIGHT (8) PLAYERS AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES DURING A GAME TO AVOID A FORFEIT. A TEAM THAT STARTS A GAME WITH EIGHT PLAYERS BUT LOSES ONE DURING THE GAME TO INJURY OR ANY OTHER CAUSE FORFEITS THE GAME. A TEAM WITHOUT AT LEAST EIGHT PLAYERS AVAILABLE AT THE ANNOUNCED START OF THE GAME FORFEITS EVEN IF A PLAYER SHOWS UP LATE CAUSING THE ROSTER TO INCREASE TO EIGHT PLAYERS.**
- c. If a player leaves during the game or is injured resulting in the team having eight (8) players then the team must take an out at that player's spot in the lineup for the NEXT at bat only. **If a player shows up late to a game (after the official line up has been exchanged) he may enter the line-up and must do so as the last batter. At no time is the player ineligible to enter the game.**

5. **REGULATION GAME:** Each game shall be a maximum of six (6) innings, unless extra innings are necessary. There is no outside time limit on any game; however, no new inning may be started after one hour and fifty-five minutes (1:55) from the actual start time of the game. There is a 10 run mercy rule in effect after the losing team has had a minimum of four turns at bat. (This means if the visiting team trails by 10 runs at the conclusion of three innings, it must score at least one run in its next at bat or the game is over.) In the event of a tie after 6 innings, additional innings will be played until a winner is declared, unless the 'No new inning' rule comes into play, in which case the game result will be recorded as a tie. Tied games will NOT be completed at a later date.

6. **RUNS PER INNING LIMITS:** A maximum of five (5) runs per each half inning of play may be scored by any team at bat through the conclusion of the fifth inning or any inning prior to the umpire announcing or declaring the "last inning." **It shall be the responsibility of the umpire to declare and advise managers of the "last inning" if, in the umpire's sole discretion and judgment, a sixth inning will not be able to be played.** Even if an additional inning could have been played after the declaration by the umpire of the "last inning," the umpire's decision and judgment is final and shall stand.

7. **ROSTERS/MANDATORY PLAYING TIME:**

- a. To the extent possible, teams will be limited to eleven (11) players
- b. Each player must play a minimum of four innings on defense. **NO PLAYER SHALL SIT ON THE BENCH IN CONSECUTIVE INNINGS.**
- c. There will be free substitutions defensively, with the exception of the pitcher. Once a player has been removed from the mound as a pitcher, the player may not return to pitch again, regardless of the number of pitches thrown.
- d. Each and every player **MUST** play one (1) inning in the infield each game during

the entire season and in NBBA tournament play, regardless of how many innings are played.

- e. No player will sit as a defensive player at the start of consecutive games. Any player who does not start a game on defense, **WILL** be in a starting defensive position in the next game the team plays that the player attends. (Example: A player is benched to start a game and misses the team's next scheduled game. The player **MUST** be in the starting lineup on defense when he returns). A manager is **NOT** excused from complying with this rule even if the manager is prepared to have the player start the team's next scheduled game if that game is missed by the player.
- f. Development of complete players being a primary focus and function of this division, every manager is expected to draft at least one eight or nine year old (preferably no less than two) player(s) and develop that player/those players as pitchers. In order to ensure the development of young pitchers and that managers are meeting the goals of player development for this division, in **each** game that is played, a first year 9 or 8 year old or a combination of multiple first year 9 or 8 year olds **MUST** begin and complete pitching one full inning, defined as 3 outs or 5 runs, unless they must be pulled due to reaching a pitch count limit. That is, the three outs or five runs may not be recorded over the course of more than one inning. An 8 or 9 year old may enter the game as a pitcher in the middle of an inning as long as there are no outs, no runs have scored and there is a 0-0 count on the batter. No 8 or 9 year old may be brought in to face a batter in the middle of an at bat. This is to discourage managers from bringing in a pitcher to face a batter with an 0-2 count, make one pitch and record an out. While discretion is given to managers here to insert a pitcher in the middle of an inning, it is the best and preferred practice to have an 8 or 9 year old start and finish an inning. **THE FAILURE OF A MANAGER TO PITCH AN ELIGIBLE 8 OR 9 YEAR OLD IN A GAME WILL RESULT IN A FORFEIT OF THAT GAME EVEN IF THE TEAM WINS AND REGARDLESS OF SCORE. NO EXCEPTIONS.** (e.g., a Mercy Rule win will be forfeited if obtained without compliance with this rule. A game in which no 9 year old pitches will be forfeited regardless of reason for 9 year old absence).

9. **THROWING THE BAT:** Any player who, after one warning, throws the bat while batting may be ejected from the game.

10. **STEALING 1st Half of the Season:**

- a. Stealing of 2nd or 3rd base is allowed. The runner is locked at 3rd base. Base runners may not steal or advance home on an attempt by the catcher to throw the runner out at 3rd base or any other base or on a steal or a pickoff attempt at any base.
- b. A runner may not score from third unless there is an offensive play (batted ball, or forced in by walk or hit by pitch).
- c. Lead-offs and stealing from first and second base will be allowed from the start of the season.

- d. There are NO lead-offs at third base. The runner must stay in contact with the third base bag until pitcher releases the ball, and the runner may not break for home unless the ball is put in play.
- e. No trick or decoy plays are allowed.
- f. A player occupying third base who repeatedly fails to maintain contact with the bag after being warned by the umpire may be called out.

11. **STEALING 2nd Half of the Season** (Discretion to designate when the 2nd half begins rests with Division Coordinator. Umpires should be notified by DC and managers):

- a. Stealing of 2nd, 3rd and home is allowed. The runner is NOT locked at 3rd base. Runners can steal home or advance to home on an attempt by the catcher to throw the runner out at 3rd base or any other base or on a steal or pickoff attempt at any base.
- b. A runner can score from third on a non-offensive play (passed ball, wild pitch, throwing error, etc.)
- c. Lead-offs from all bases are permitted in the 2nd half of the season.

12. **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE 1st Half of the Season:** The dropped third strike rule shall NOT apply. The batter is out and may not attempt to advance to first base if it is unoccupied.

13. **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE 2nd Half of the Season** (Discretion to designate when 2nd half begins rests with Division Coordinator. Umpire should be notified by DCs and managers.): The dropped third strike rule is in effect, with the exception of the last out of an inning. If there are 2 outs and a player strikes out and there is a dropped 3rd strike, the batter is automatically out. The dropped third strike rule applies only if first base is **unoccupied** or open with less than two out. A player on first base leading off or attempting to steal is still considered to be occupying first base

14. **INFIELD FLY RULE:** The infield fly rule applies in this division.

15. **PITCHING RESTRICTIONS:**

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PITCHES FOR ALL PLAYERS IS 50 UNTIL APRIL 1.

Maximum number of pitches by age group (April 1 and after):

- 8 yr olds - 50 pitch max - may finish batter
- 9 yr olds - 55 pitch max- may finish batter
- 10 yr olds - 65 pitch max- may finish batter
- 11 yr olds - 75 pitch max- may finish batter
- 12 yr old and over - 85 pitch max- may finish batter
- 13 and 14 yr olds - 85 pitch max, may finish batter

NBBA has adopted the following for pitch counts as it pertains to days of rest:

If a player pitches 66 or more pitches in a day, four (4) calendar days of rest must be observed.
If a player pitches 51 -65 pitches in a day, three (3) calendar days of rest must be observed.
If a player pitches 36 - 50 pitches in a day, two (2) calendar days of rest must be observed.
If a player pitches 21 - 35 pitches in a day, one (1) calendar day of rest must be observed.
If a player pitches 1 - 20 pitches in a day, no calendar day of rest is required.

A pitcher may finish pitching to a given batter before going into next calendar day of rest threshold. By way of example, if the pitcher starts the batter with 33 pitches and finishes that same batter with 38 pitches, then his threshold reverts back to 35 pitches and the player would be required to observe 1 calendar day of rest.

MANAGERS PLEASE NOTE: WHEN DETERMINING A PLAYERS AGE FOR PURPOSES OF PITCH COUNT, USE THE ACTUAL AGE OF YOUR PITCHER, NOT THE LEAGUE AGE. Ex., Player whose birthday is April 20, 2010 is an 8 year old for pitch count purposes until April 20, 2010 when he is a 9 year old. Managers caught breaking this rule, regardless of intent, will be subject to discipline and the affected pitcher(s) may be ruled ineligible. Managers: DO NOT mess this up for your players or your teams.

Pitcher to catcher ban: any pitcher who delivers at least 41 pitches in a game may not then play catcher for the remainder of the day. This is a hard stop. The pitcher reaching the 40th pitch who wishes to catch cannot finish the batter in this circumstance.

Any catcher who catches into his 4th inning will not be permitted to pitch. For purposes of this rule the catcher has started to catch into a fourth inning when the first pitch of the inning is delivered.

Once removed from the pitching position, a player cannot re-enter the same game at the pitching position. Suspended games resumed on a different day are included in this restriction.

16. **BALKS:** There are no balks in Mustang. It is a teachable moment for the kids. However, in no instance will a runner be penalized by being picked off or thrown out stealing if a pitcher has "balked." If a "balk" is called, the runner is safe at the base the runner occupied.

17. **INTENTIONAL WALKS: There are no intentional walks in Mustang.** All batters must be pitched to. [Note: pitching to a batter carefully is distinct from intentionally walking a player]

18. **HIT BY PITCH/HIT BATTERS:** IF a single pitcher hits three (3) batters during a game the pitcher must be removed from the mound.

19. **PLAYER EJECTION:** Any player who is ejected from a game for a game play will be subject to a review by the Division Coordinator who may issue additional discipline, including suspension. If a player is ejected from a game twice during a single season that player shall be suspended from at least the team's next game and up to maximum of three (3) games (and may also be prohibited from practicing) after review by the NBBA president who will consult with the

Division Coordinator. If a player is ejected three times in the same season, that player is subject to suspension for the remainder of the season upon review and ruling of the NBBA Board.

20. **RAINOUTS:** Rainouts will not be rescheduled at this level

21. **PONY/NBBA BAT RULES:**

- a. 2-5/8" barrel bats and 2-1/4" bats are **LEGAL**. If a 2-5/8" bat is a -3, it must be BBCOR certified. All other minus factor bats, whether 2-5/8" or 2-1/4" barrel, (-5, -7, -9, etc.), must be YBBCOR certified with the USA Bat licensing stamp on the bat in order to be used for league and all-star play. All bats without the USA Bat stamp are illegal and not eligible for use during league play.
- b. 2-3/4" barrel bats are **ILLEGAL**
- c. Wood bats are **LEGAL** with a barrel no larger than 2-5/8"

If an ineligible bat is used or is deemed illegal, **IT IS AN AUTOMATIC OUT.**

22. **MUST AVOID RULE:** While recognizing that not all incidental contact can be entirely eliminated, there shall be no collisions between base runners and defensive players. In all cases, without exception, the runner shall avoid a collision. There is no "must slide" rule in Pony; however, a runner must make an attempt to avoid contact. In deciding whether a runner is safe or out, the fact that contact is made is not determinative, but rather should be judged on whether the player made a reasonable effort to avoid contact. Players not attempting to avoid contact should be called out.

- a. If the runner makes more than incidental contact with a defensive player, the runner shall be declared out.
- b. If, in the judgment of the umpire, any contact was more than incidental and unintentional, the runner shall be ejected from the game.
- c. Should the umpire determine, in his or her judgment, that the runner had an intent to injure, in addition to the ejection and an automatic one game suspension that accompanies such an ejection, the player shall remain suspended pending an incident review and determination of the conduct by the Board of Directors.
- d. If a runner slides or runs past a base to avoid a collision because the defensive player is blocking the base without possession of the ball or without the ball arriving at the defensive player's position, then the runner shall be declared "safe" and awarded the base. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the runner would have attained an additional base safely, the umpire may award the runner one additional base.

23. **WEEKLY EVENTS:** There shall be no more than four (4) events per week. Events are games or practices at which a coach and more than three (3) team members are present.

24. **SCORE KEEPING:**

- a. The home team is required to provide a scorekeeper who will score the game in NBBA supplied score book. The home scorekeeper will be the official scorekeeper for the game. The home team also is responsible for operating the

scoreboard.

- b. The home team's manager is responsible for ensuring the input and uploading of scores and pitching statistics to the league's website. All scores and pitching statistics should be posted as quickly as possible following the completion of each game, but in any event, **MUST** be posted no later than 2:00 p.m. the day following completion of a game. Because the failure to post pitch counts may adversely impact the pitching staff of the team that in a previous game had been the visiting team, any manager of a team that was the home team who fails to post pitch counts within the specified time frame, will be subject to discipline, including a suspension for the team's next game and any player who pitched in the game for the home team in which pitch counts are not posted on time will not be eligible to pitch in the team's next game regardless of the number of pitches the player threw and days of rest in between games.

25. **PROTESTS AND FORFEITS:** No post-game protests shall be allowed. Any issues or concerns over interpretation of these rules shall be determined in game and first shall be directed to the umpire. If resolution cannot be obtained through the umpire, the Division Coordinator shall be consulted. If the Division Coordinator cannot resolve the issue or is unavailable, then the issue shall be directed to the Rules Chairman. If the Rules Chairman cannot resolve the issue or is unavailable, then the league president shall be consulted. In no case will the time of any game be extended in order to deal with a question of interpretation of these rules. Game results are final. Forfeits are as described in these rules.

26. **ADDITIONAL RULE PERTAINING TO LENGTH OF PLAYOFF GAMES:**
REGULATION GAME: Each game shall be six (6) innings in duration; there will be no time limits. There is a 10 run mercy rule in effect after the losing team has had a minimum of 4 at bats. In the event of a tie after 6 innings, additional innings will be played until a winner is determined. In the event of a tie after 6 innings, additional innings will be played until a winner is determined. Any game which cannot be completed due to darkness/weather will resume (most likely the following day) with the same score, conditions, etc. This means that no pitcher previously removed from the mound can re-enter the game as pitcher. Teams must use the same batting order and the same number of players. A player who was present and in the lineup at the start of the game on the previous day who is absent on the day the suspended game is continued may be withdrawn from the lineup, but if the player's absence causes the player's team to have less than 9 eligible players, it will be treated like an injured player and the team will take an out only for the missing player's next turn at bat. Both managers shall be responsible for agreeing on the conditions existing at the time a game is suspended and documenting the conditions and advising the Division Coordinator as soon as possible following the suspension of the game. The higher seed gets choice of home or visitor for the first playoff game only. Thereafter, a coin toss will determine home or visitor.

27. **FREE AGENCY PLAYER POOL:** NBBA seeks to ensure that scheduled games go forward and that forfeitures, such as those occasioned by a lack of available players, are minimized. Additionally, NBBA seeks to provide opportunities for players to experience higher levels of competition where appropriate, for example, in a division with older players.

Accordingly, teams are permitted to designate up to three (3) players from the immediately lower division to be called upon for the purpose of filling a vacancy on a team roster for a given game (the "Free Agency Pool Players"). Managers are required to identify their pool of Free Agency Pool Players to their Division Coordinators at least two (2) days prior to the first pitch of the first game of the season. To the extent Free Agency Pool Players will be playing in leagues with older players, a parent or legal guardian of a Free Agency Pool Player must, prior to submission by any Manager of his/her designated pool, execute a Special Consent to permit participation by the player in the Free Agency Pool, whereby the parent or guardian will acknowledge the increased risks and hazards of playing with older players, and waives any and all claims arising from same. Managers shall present all Special Consents to Division Coordinators prior to the first game, and Division Coordinators shall forward the Special Consents to the acting NBBA Secretary. No manager may alter or change his/her Free Agency Pool without notice to the Division Coordinator. Further, the Division Coordinator shall not accept any such changes in or to a team's Free Agency Pool without first receiving the associated Special Consent(s). **Up to three Free Agency Pool Players may be called upon to play in any particular game, but each pool player must be present or approved for play by the start of the game. A Pool Player may not enter the game once it has begun unless the Pool Player was present at the announced start of the game or approved by the Division Coordinator prior to the start of the game.** Free Agency Pool Players may not participate in playoff games. In addition, there will be no conflict with a Free Agency Pool Player's permanent team. Free Agency Pool Players may not pitch or catch. The Division Coordinator must approve the use and eligibility of a Free Agency Pool Player. Free Agency Pool Players are available to allow teams to field a complete nine player lineup and to avoid forfeits. Pool Players shall NOT be used to the exclusion of normally rostered players or to reduce their playing time. Violations of this rule will result in managerial suspension which may include multiple games.

28. **MANAGERS CODE OF CONDUCT:** The Code of Conduct for Managers is a part of these rules. ALL managers and coaches must be familiar with the rules contained in the Code of Conduct.

Each Manager, regardless of playing level, ultimately IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE TEAM'S FANS AND PARENTS AND WILL BE HELD BY THE LEAGUE AND GAME OFFICIALS TO ACCOUNT for that conduct. Thus, it is expected that each Manager will explain the Parent Code of Conduct to all parents at any initial meeting or practice and will remind the team's fans regarding appropriate and inappropriate behavior throughout the season. If parents/fans of a given team are determined in the judgment of the umpire or a league official to be acting inappropriately, the parents/fans may be ejected ALONG WITH THE MANAGER, who may also be subject to further discipline by the league. Absolutely no "baiting" or "taunting" of opposing players will be tolerated.