



# PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION PONY DIVISION RULES OF PLAY (Revised February 2013)

1. The games in the **PONY Division of PPBA** are played for both instruction and fun. All emphasis is on developing teamwork, playing one's best, and developing and demonstrating the principles of good sportsmanship.

As of 2013, the Pony division is now composed of two different subdivisions: (i) one in which players pitch to their own teams; and (ii) a new subdivision in which pitchers pitch against the opposing team. Some different rules apply to each subdivision, in particular related to pitching.

## **Official Rules of Baseball Apply**

2. The general rules of baseball as printed in "Official Baseball Rules" and as accepted by the Official Playing Rules Committee of professional baseball, apply to all games.. The only exceptions to the "Official Baseball Rules" are outlined in these RULES OF PLAY.

**No player who will be 9 years of age or older as of May 1st of the current year will be permitted to play PONY Baseball except by permission of the PPBA Steering Committee.**

**Umpires & Coaches; Game Time Review of Rules; Lineup Exchange; Late or No Umpire:**

3. These rules of play are intended to guide the teams, to teach the players the fundamentals of the game and avoid disputes. Any and all questions regarding the rules shall be resolved by the umpire(s). A paid umpire provided by the league must confer jointly AT HOME PLATE with both managers prior to each game to review the rules. Batting lineups, including all players' name and numbers must be exchanged at this time. During the game, the decisions concerning play will not be left to any of the managers or coaches. In the event the paid umpire is late or is absent; the opposing managers will together agree and designate the game's umpire(s).

### **The Umpire and Challenging Calls:**

The role of the umpire is to officiate the running of the game. **The rules of the game cannot be abridged or changed by the managers before or during the game.** Rules are defined as "League Rules" or "Major League Rules." **The umpire is the final and only arbiter of making umpiring calls. The coaches cannot question the umpire's judgment call.** The only aspect they can question is the interpretation of the rule. If a coach disagrees with the interpretation of the rule he or she may file a complaint with the PPBA steering committee.

**If a coach continues to argue a call or interpretation after discussing it with the umpire, whether it is on or off the field, the umpire is empowered to:**

- A)** Throw the coach out of the game;
- B)** Suspend the game until the coach complies with the ejection;
- C)** Declare a forfeit by the ejected coaches' team if the ejected coach does not comply with the ejection within three minutes of the umpire's decision; and
- D)** Request that the coach be suspended from future games.

### **Coaches' Role:**

The coaches' role is to teach, manage, and insure the administration of their team. **Coaches are expected to keep their parents and fans under control.** If a parent/fan disrupts or prohibits play of the game the umpire may stop the game until the individual(s) stops or suspend the game due to the behavior of the individual(s).

### **An Official Game; Last Inning; Rain or other Delays**

4. Game will be official and complete after six innings or after one hour and fifty minutes (110 minutes) of playing time, whichever comes first. No inning will begin during the last 15 minutes of a game, but once begun, every attempt will be made to provide time to complete the last inning. The umpire will announce the beginning of the Last Inning to both managers at 15 minutes before the scheduled end of playing time

If Last Inning is called during the visiting team's half of the inning the unlimited run rule applies for the whole inning. If Last Inning is called after the visiting team's half of the inning and the visiting team was subject to the four (4) run limit then the home team is also subject to the (4) run limit even if this results in a tie or loss for the home team.

In the event of rain or other delay, **four complete innings or one hour of playing time will constitute a complete game (3½ innings if the home team is ahead).** In the event that the final inning is incomplete after the allotted time has run out, the umpire will either: a) extend the playing time up to 15 minutes, if possible or b) return the score to that of the last completed inning. If rain or wet fields cause the start of any game to be delayed by more than 1/2 hour, that game will be automatically canceled.

If a game start is delayed because the prior game ended late, the following game's playing time will be extended for a time equal to the delay up to 15 additional minutes. The Last Inning rule will apply to the new playing time.

For example: *The prior game ends at 11:20am - the following game's playing time will end at 1:05pm with Last Inning called at 12:50pm.*

Games may actually be started before their scheduled start time if the field is empty, both teams agree and an umpire is available with the game ending at the regular scheduled time. Teams that can get started early and do not waste time and also get more playing time

The umpire will extend the time for teams playing a long "Last Inning" and the following two teams, in this rare instance may lose some playing time. Last game need only worry about darkness,

### **RAINOUTS**

5. Every attempt must be made to play games as scheduled. It is difficult to predict spring weather even an hour in advance. When there is doubt, teams should meet. In other words, coaches should call their players only to cancel a game, not to tell them it will be played. Only the PPBA or the umpire may cancel games.

**PPBA will announce all rain cancellations or rain delayed starts on the  
PPBA HOTLINE 888-473-6864**

**Rosters; Lineup Cards; Bench Coach; 4 Coaches; Warm-up Between Innings; Home Team Supplies Bases; Away Team Supplies Courtesy 1<sup>st</sup> Base; Dugout:**

6. Prior to each game, each team manager/coach must submit a lineup card to the opposing

manager/coach containing the first and last name and jersey number of each player then present in order of how they will bat. No more than four adults (including managers and coaches) are permitted on the field or on the bench at any time during the game. To conserve playing time, fielding practice in the infield and outfield between innings is limited to the time it takes the pitcher to throw **seven warm-up pitches**.

**Each team must supply a game ball.** The home team shall supply bases, home plate and a pitching rubber. The visiting team shall supply a courtesy 1<sup>st</sup> base which shall have the same dimensions as the bases supplied by the Home Team. The courtesy 1<sup>st</sup> base shall be placed alongside and touching the right side of 1<sup>st</sup> base, and shall rest on the foul side of the foul line. **The courtesy 1<sup>st</sup> base must be used by the batter-runner** when a play is being made on them at 1<sup>st</sup> base. **The fielder must use the fair territory base** for a play on a batter-runner.

**If a batter-runner fails to use the foul-side base** and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with a play at 1<sup>st</sup> base, **the batter-runner shall be declared out**. **If a fielder attempts to make a play on the batter-runner and uses the foul-side base, the runner shall be declared safe.** After the batter-runner becomes a runner, the base in fair territory shall be used exclusively by that runner (for tagging up, etc.).

**Official Ball: WORTH - RIF 5 (9" – 5 oz. Solid Polyurethane Center - Leather cover)**

#### **Base and Pitching Rubber Distances:**

7. Bases will be **FORTY EIGHT feet (48') apart**. The Pitching Rubber when players pitch to their own team will be **THIRTY feet (30')** from the back point of home plate to the front of the pitching rubber (the side closest to home plate). The Pitching Rubber when players pitch against the opposing team will be **THIRTY-THREE feet (33')**, measured the same way.

## **BATS**

8. Bats are restricted to wooden models. **Aluminum baseball bats or bats of other composite materials may not be used**. No softball bats shall be used. Should an illegal bat be discovered after the first pitch to the batter using the illegal bat and before the first pitch to the next batter, **the batter using the illegal bat shall be called out**.

## **UNIFORMS**

9. All players must be in full uniform in order to be allowed to play, which must include a team hat and shirt (which bears a number that is unique to that player on that team). Only baseball or sweat pants are permitted. **No shorts or jeans are permitted**. Rubber soled athletic shoes with or without rubber cleats may be worn, **metal spikes are prohibited**. **No watches or removable jewelry may be worn**. Jewelry permanently affixed to the body can be worn provided, in the judgment of the umpire, that it is completely covered by a bandage / band-aid.

#### **Batting Helmet:**

10. All players must wear a batting helmet **while at bat and** a batting helmet **while on base**. Replacement of helmet in the field requires a time out called by the umpire.

#### **Catcher's Equipment:**

11. The catcher must wear a helmet, mask (with throat protector), chest protector, shin guards and a protective cup (males) while playing the field.

## **Minimum Team; Forfeits; Late Players**

12. A team failing to field at least 8 players 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time, as determined by the umpire according to the provisions of these rules, shall forfeit the game. **A 3-inning game MUST then be played** dividing all available players.

**The purpose of this rule is two-fold:** a) The players who come should have the opportunity to play; b) The players who do not come must realize that there is a consequence for failing to support their team mates and for failing to arrive at scheduled games on time. A player who arrives after the line-ups have been exchanged and the umpire calls “play ball” will take place in the batting order **after the last player listed.**

**If a team, for any reason, cannot field at least 8 players during the course of the game,** that team shall forfeit the game and play shall continue for the balance of the time period by dividing all the available players. In the event a game is continued (whether on another day or much later in the same day), a player who did not come to the first part of the game is eligible to play in the continued part of the game and **shall be placed at the end of the batting order.**

## **Playing Time; Defensive Positions; Free Substitution**

13. Every member of each team must play a defensive position in the field **for at least two innings, or six outs during the first three innings** (players on teams with more than 15 players in attendance need only play one inning or three outs during the first two innings). Except for reason of discipline or injury, no player should sit on the bench for more than one inning in a row.

**Eleven (11) defensive positions are fielded;** the nine standard baseball positions are filled along with two (2) extra outfielders, who are positioned at the discretion of the team manager. **All outfielders must take their position on the outfield grass at least ten (10) feet from the infield baseline, and may not move into the infield until the ball is put into play.** Free substitutions and or shifting of defensive players are permitted at any time.

**PLEASE VIEW THE PONY DEFENSIVE SETUP CHART ON PAGE 10**  
**(this chart shows the defensive pitcher position for the Pony subdivision in which players pitch to their own team; this chart does NOT apply to the subdivision in which players pitch against the opposing team—where there is no need for a defensive pitcher because the pitcher fields his/her own position)**

## **Pitching Rules; Hit Batters**

14. There are two subdivisions within the Pony division: (A) one in which players pitch to their own team, and (B) one in which players pitch against the opposing team. Different pitching rules apply in each subdivision. In all cases, pitching is to be done overhand, not underhand.

### **A. When Players Pitch to Their Own Team:**

Each team pitches to its own players. **For the first two scheduled games of the season,** all pitching may be done by a coach from the offensive team. **Player pitching will start at the third scheduled game of the season, regardless of rainouts, forfeits or cancelled games.** **A batter hit by a pitch cannot advance to first base.** A pitcher who hits two batters in

an inning must be replaced, but may return to pitch in any other inning (when the same rule applies).

However, throughout the season, either or both teams have the option of using adult pitching **for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> innings ONLY**--if it is announced **before the start of the game**. Adult coaches may pitch with one knee on the ground.

No player may pitch for more than three innings or 9 outs of a six-inning game, whichever is less. Free substitution of the pitcher is permitted at the end of an at-bat. **A batted ball that hits or is touched by a pitcher is a foul ball.** Pitchers must avoid the batted ball and let the defensive pitcher field the ball..

**Defensive Pitcher** – ONE (1) defensive pitcher position is played to teach the importance of a pitcher as a fielder. This position **is not** a free-roaming infielder and the player must adhere to the following positioning rules.

**The defensive pitcher must play:**

- 1) Close to the mound -- ***no closer to home plate than the pitching rubber.***
- 2) On either side of the mound -- ***within 5 feet of the pitcher***
- 3) **NOT** in the space behind the pitcher (***SEE Defensive Set-Up Chart on Page 10***)

If the defensive pitcher does not respect these boundaries and makes a play that results in a base runner being tagged or thrown out, the runner will be called safe and allowed to advance to the base being taken. This rule is in force to allow well hit balls to be put into play.

### **B. When Players Pitch Against the Opposing Team**

In this subdivision, players pitch against the opposing team. Pitchers are restricted to two innings per game (one pitch counts as an inning). These innings need not be consecutive. One reason for restricting the innings that players can pitch is to protect young arms from being hurt through overuse; the other reason is to encourage coaches to train and use more players to pitch.

**PITCH COUNT ADVISORY:** Although it is not an official rule of the PPBA, coaches are advised to monitor the number of pitches their players throw, because it is not uncommon at this age for a lot of pitches to be thrown in a single inning. Little League suggests that players this age throw no more than 75 pitches in a single day. This information is offered just as a guideline.

**A batter hit by a pitch advances to first base.** A pitcher who hits two batters in an inning or three batters in a game must be replaced and may not return to pitch, though the player can stay in the game to play another position.

## **Universal Batting / Batting Out of Order**

**15.** All players at a game must be in the batting order at all times. All players must bat in order. If a player bats out of order, rule 6.07 of the Official Rules shall apply. *A batter who is*

unable to bat because of injury will be removed from the game and batter order will continue with the next listed batter. **A batter who is unwilling (for whatever reason) to bat will be called out. The umpire alone will determine which batters are “Unwilling” and which are “Unable.” The manager or bench coach **must notify both the umpire and opposing team's manager when player leaves a game before it is officially concluded.****

## **Balls & Strikes; Bunts Are Allowed; No Dropped 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike; No Stealing**

**16. There are different pitching rules for the two different subdivisions of Pony:** (A) in which players pitch to their own team, and (B) in which players pitch against the opposing team.

### **A. When Players Pitch to Their Own Team**

There is a **limit of 10 pitches** to a batter. No balls and strikes are called. A batter will be called out if they do not get a hit. The official ruling is a strikeout. There are no walks given.

Three swinging strikes will result in a strikeout. Foul balls count as strikes, ***but a foul on the third strike will not result in a strikeout unless the ball has been bunted. A Bunted Foul ball after two strikes is considered a strike and will result in a STRIKEOUT.***

**Foul tips do not count as a third strike or as an out if caught by the catcher.** The third strike DOES NOT need to be caught by the catcher. Any foul ball which is hit in the air **5 FEET or higher and is caught is an out. The umpire will make this determination.**

### **B. When Players Pitch Against the Opposing Team**

Balls and strikes will be called by an umpire. Three swinging or called strikes by the umpire will be a strikeout. A bunted foul ball after two strikes is a strikeout. A foul tip on the 3rd strike is an out whether or not it is caught by the catcher. Four balls will cause the batter to walk—except when bases are loaded, when it shall take 6 balls for a batter to walk.

Pitchers and coaches are not allowed to argue an umpire's calls of balls and strikes.

### **Stealing:**

**17.** Base runners are not allowed to steal. Leading is not allowed. Improper leads or stealing will result in a warning by the umpire to the player, the runner's team, and to the team manager and the runner must return to the proper base. After the warning, infractions by players on that team will result in the offending runner being called out even if a play is not made.

## **Dead Ball; Advancing Bases; Out of Bounds & Ground Rules**

**18. There are some different rules for the two different subdivisions of Pony:** (A) in which players pitch to their own team, and (B) in which players pitch against the opposing team.

### **A. When Players Pitch to Their Own Team**

End of play is when the ball **has been fielded and a throw or play** has been made.

For example:

- **Batted balls hit to the outfield:** Play is over and the ball is dead once a ball thrown towards the infield.



- **Batted balls that remain in the infield:** Play is over and the ball is dead when an infielder fields the ball **and** throws to any base **or** attempts to tag a runner.
- Under this section, once the ball is dead, **Base runners may only advance to the base they have started towards when the play ended, at the risk of being put out.**
- The base runner may return to the prior base without the risk of being put out. No new bases may be taken.

## **B. When Players Pitch Against the Opposing Team**

The batted ball is dead after a play has been made and the umpire has called "time out" or when the ball has been returned to the pitcher on the mound. (It is not enough to merely throw the ball, as in the other subdivision. "Time out" must be called by the umpire.) As long as the batted ball is considered to be in play, runners may advance at their own risk.

## **No Infield Fly Rule; Catcher's Obstruction; Slide Feet First Only**

19. The infield fly rule will not be used. *A batter is never automatically out on a pop fly* to the infield and runners should attempt to avoid force plays by advancing if the fly ball is not caught.

In addition, rule 7.06 of the "Official Baseball Rules" will be strictly enforced: *"The catcher, without the ball in his or her possession has no right to block the pathway of a runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he or she is fielding a ball or ... already has the ball in his or her hands."*

## **Catcher as Base Runner to Leave Bases if 2 Outs**

20. To conserve playing time, when the catcher for the next half inning is a base runner **and** his team is assessed a second out, ***the catcher/base runner shall be replaced on the base path by the teammate that made the last out*** (at bat or on the bases).

## **4-Run Mercy Rule, Last Inning Exception, Tie Breaker**

21. Except in the last inning of play, if team at bat scores 4 runs in a single inning, its offensive half of the inning will end, regardless of the score. **In the last inning there shall be no limit to the runs scored by either team unless the visiting team is ahead by 15 or more runs, then that team will be limited to 4 runs for the last inning.**

Then, in the bottom of the inning, the home team will be limited to the number of runs needed to **tie the game**. If the home team ties the score, the game ends in a tie, in this situation, **the home team cannot WIN the game.**

**Tiebreaker:** Each team is responsible for keeping count of the put outs for each side. In the event of a tied score, the team with the most put outs will be declared the winner. If each team has the same number of put-outs against each other, the game will be declared a tie.

### **Post Game Handshake:**

22. All players and coaches on each team must line up at home plate after each game to exchange handshakes (in Stanley Cup-style). **Any disrespectful or disruptive behavior by**

**any player or coach** during the post game handshake **may result in at least** a one-game suspension.

## **Coaches Conduct**

**24.** No adult is permitted in fair territory except while the umpire has called a time out. Three adult coaches are permitted on the field (in foul territory) during a teams offensive half of an inning (in the first base coaches box, the third base coaching box, and one other site) and one adult coach is permitted on the field in (foul territory) during his team's defensive half of the inning, provided that this coach is not interfering with the line of sight of the offensive coaches.

All teams should have a bench coach to keep the line-up in order, to keep score, and to have players ready to bat. Coaches are expected to have the line-up handy in order that games may be played expeditiously. **Excessive coaching is not allowed during the game.** While players may be reminded of proper technique, **this should not cause the game to be delayed.** **No coach is permitted to touch any player on the field or the ball if it is in play.** This may result in an out being called by the umpire. **After the first three games of the season are played, an out will be called.**

## **No Food, Smoking, in the Dugout or on the Field, etc.**

**25.** No food is permitted in the dugout area or the playing field at any time during the game. No smoking or alcoholic beverages are allowed on the playing field or in the dugouts, whether by coaches, managers, umpires or any others associated with the game, while it is underway.

## **Throwing the Bat or Equipment**

**26.** Throwing the bat or other equipment is not permitted. When a player intentionally throws a bat or piece of equipment, **at the discretion of the umpire,** **that player may be ejected from the game,**

When a batter unintentionally throws the bat, that batter and that team shall be warned. **Any batter on that team who thereafter unintentionally throws the bat shall be called out.**

When a player unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, the team shall receive a warning. Thereafter, if any player from the same team whom unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, that team shall be assessed an out in its next at bat.

## **No Heckling Rule**

**27.** At the request of either manager or the umpire on his own, **the umpire shall instruct that heckling or destructive comments (trash talk) made by any player, coach, spectator, or other participant shall cease. The umpire is empowered to:**

1. **First,** warn the offending individual and his team.
2. **Second,** eject the offending individual.
3. **Third,** end the game, if necessary, granting a win to the non-offending team.

**The purpose of this rule is to encourage players, coaches, & spectators to root for their team, NOT AGAINST the other team.**



## **Code of Conduct Violations**

**28.** Any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant who (1) engages in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant; or (2) initiates a fight or scuffle with any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant during, at, immediately following, or otherwise in connection with a PPBA game or event **shall be subject to being banned from any future PPBA game or event including coaching for or playing on any team participating in PPBA games or events.**

**Such banning, in the sole discretion of the PPBA Board, may be temporary or permanent and subject to such other and additional conditions as may imposed by the PPBA Board, including but not limited to, family members of the offending person being banned from PPBA games and events.**

**The President or Vice President of the PPBA Board, or any individual or group of individuals duly appointed by the President of the PPBA, may temporarily ban any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant accused of engaging in the above prohibited conduct from all PPBA games and events including coaching for or playing on any team participating in PPBA games or events. Such ban shall remain in effect until the next monthly or special meeting of the PPBA Board.**

## Pony Defensive Positions Chart

Note that Player 1, the defensive pitcher, is only used in the subdivision in which players pitch to their own team.

In the subdivision in which players pitch against the opposing team, the pitcher fields his/her own position.

