

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.

PONY DIVISION/CONFERENCE

Pony increases the field size to 80-foot base paths with a 54-foot pitching distance. This continues to help players gradually increase their skills and strength as they prepare for high-school's 90-foot diamonds and 60-foot pitching. This league is for 13 and 14 year olds.

LOCAL PLAYING RULES

Playing rules conform to the rules of Major League Baseball and the 2019 Official Pony Baseball Rules and Regulations, in addition to any rules promulgated by the hosting PONY organization. For 2019, the hosting organization is Costa Mesa Pony. The following local rules shall be followed by Newport Beach Baseball Association teams to the extent they do not conflict with the above and are also for use when organizing teams for Newport Beach Baseball Association.

1. ELIGIBILITY:

All players must be league age 13 or 14 as outlined in Official Pony Baseball Rules and Regulations. League age is currently based on a July 31 cutoff date. Players who are league age 15 and in the 8th grade are eligible to play regular season and playoffs only, subject to the pitching restrictions included in these rules. No player will be eligible to play Newport Beach Baseball Association Pony division baseball if that player is already signed up with another PONY organization. Players who are league age 14 may not play in the Pony division of the Newport Beach Baseball Association if the player is a member of a non-scholastic (i.e., club or travel) team and the Newport Beach Baseball Association passes a resolution at the first meeting of its scheduled year establishing that limitation.

2. COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE:

The Conference will be comprised of teams from Orange County, including Costa Mesa, Newport Harbor Baseball Association and NBBA along with other potential PONY leagues.

3. SCHEDULE:

All teams will play one another in accordance with a distributed schedule. All efforts will be made to avoid scheduling games for the weekend preceding and following Spring Break in the Newport-Mesa School District and for Memorial Day Weekend. Weekday games will commence no earlier than 4:00 p.m. until Daylight Saving Time. After Daylight Saving games may begin as early as 5:00 p.m. Saturday games generally will be scheduled at 10:00 a.m., noon, 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

4. **UMPIRES:**

The league will employ an umpire service and a single umpire will be scheduled to work, although two umpires are desired whenever possible. Payment for the service will be pro-rated based on the number of teams each area has. The home team is responsible for verifying that the umpires show up and reporting any no-shows to either the Division Director or a designated umpire coordinator. In the event umpires are not present, the game will be played. The managers will agree on an umpire, or if they cannot agree, each will designate an umpire. The designated umpires will split time as equally as possible between field and plate duties.

5. **POST SEASON TOURNAMENT:**

The Conference will sponsor a Post Season Double Elimination Tournament commencing after the Memorial Day Weekend. The teams will be seeded in the Post Season Tournament based upon a method agreed upon by the Presidents of the divisions. The pitching rules for post-season will be the same as those used during the regular season.

6. **STANDINGS AND SCORE REPORTING:**

the winning manager is responsible for reporting the game's score to the Conference. If NBBA is the hosting organization, NBBA will be responsible for keeping the standings and will transmit the standings sheet to each Division representative on a bi-weekly basis. To the extent possible, all standings will be posted on the NBBA web site at www.nbbaseball.org. If another PONY organization is the host, standings, official schedule and score reporting will be as set forth by the host organization.

7. **SCORE KEEPING AND PITCHING ELIGIBILITY FORM:**

Each manager is responsible for maintaining a Pitching Eligibility Form containing the date of the game, the names of each pitcher and the number of innings pitched and/or pitches made by each respective pitcher. At the conclusion of each game each manager must have the Pitching Eligibility Form signed (certified) by the official scorekeeper or the opposing manager. Each manager has the right to examine the opposing team's Pitching Eligibility Form before the start of a game to determine a pitcher's eligibility to pitch in a given game based upon prior pitch count and days of rest. **PITCHING RULES WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED DURING PLAYOFFS.**

8. **PRE-GAME:**

Before the game starts the Manager or a Coach must have the Team Roster and the Medical Release Forms for all players present. The home team is responsible for setting up the field and supplying three new approved baseballs for each game. The visiting team shall supply two new approved baseballs for each game. Each team shall be allowed 10 minutes of on-field practice prior to the scheduled game time. Each manager will make out three copies of his team's lineup before the game starts and give one copy to the opposing Manager, one copy to the Official Scorer and one copy to the Umpire. The home team must supply the Official Scorer.

9. **UNIFORM:**

Each player shall be permanently assigned a uniform number at the beginning of the Season. Metal cleats are allowed.

10. LENGTH OF GAMES:

a. Games shall be a maximum of seven innings in duration unless extended by extra innings or shortened as provided below or as provided in Rule 14. If a game is called for any reason it shall be a complete game after five innings or, if the home team has scored more runs after four turns at bat than the visiting team has scored after five turns at bat. (Note: The words "five" and "four" shall be changed to "four" and "three", respectively, for games played prior to Daylight Saving Time at non-lighted fields.)

b. If a game is called for any reason before it is a completed game, or when the score is tied, it shall be considered a suspended game. It shall be resumed from the point it was stopped at a time scheduled by League officials. There shall be no time limit (except due to umpire availability) unless there is a game scheduled later on the same field being used.

c. When there is a game scheduled to follow a game on the same field, no game will exceed two hours and forty-five minutes (2:45) and no new inning will start after two and one-half hours (2:30). The umpire will have sole discretion with respect to calling a game for darkness or rain.

11. BATTING:

a. The batting order will consist of an amount equal to the fewest number of players available to either of the two competing teams at the scheduled start of each game with a minimum of nine players. For example, Team A is playing Team B and Team A has 10 players present while Team B has 11 players present. Both teams will bat 10 players and the 11th player on Team B will be a substitute. The substitute(s) must bat at least once in the game. A starter or substitute can return to the lineup only in their original place in the batting order (unlimited times).

b. A team may play with a minimum of 8 players without forfeiting a game but must take an "out" at the 9th batter's spot in the lineup each and every time that batter's spot comes up. Should a player for any reason have to vacate his spot in the batting order, no out will be recorded and the game may proceed, unless the departure of the player shall leave only eight players remaining, in which case the batting order shall be reduced by one and the team will take the ninth spot as an out. There is no penalty ("out") to the team batting less than nine players if the reason for the player leaving is due to injury. The player who has vacated the lineup and field of play may not return to the lineup for the remainder of the game unless the reason for the player's departure was an injury.

c. A player arriving late for a game may play provided that the player is added to the final spot in the batting order. Pursuant to Rule 11(a) if the late arriving player is a member of the team with the fewest number of players, then the batting order of both teams shall be increased to be in harmony with the rule. Alternatively, if the late arriving player is part of the team with the greater number of players, then the late arriving player shall be a substitute as set forth in Rule 11(a)

d. As an alternative to 11(a), teams may bat its entire rosters during the regular season and playoffs. This determination should be made before the first pitch is thrown in the first regular

season game.

12. MANDATORY PLAY AND SUBSTITUTION:

Each player must play defensively for three complete innings and no player can sit out for more than one consecutive defensive inning. A combination of outs in different innings cannot be utilized to satisfy the three complete defensive innings rule. In the event a team has 13 players, any player may sit two consecutive innings but must play defensively for three complete innings.

13. EJECTION:

a. A player ejected from a game will be suspended from playing in the team's next game subject to review and ruling of the NBBA President and Pony Division Director. A player ejected from a second game during the same season will automatically be suspended for his teams next two games. A third ejection in the same season will subject the player to suspension for the remainder of the season.

b. A manager/coach ejected from a game by an umpire shall be suspended from the following game and cannot be present anywhere at the field location for the game for which the manager is suspended (cannot attend). A second ejection will result in an automatic two game suspension, effective immediately (cannot attend). A manager/coach ejected for a third time is subject to suspension for the remainder of the season.

14. TEN RUN RULE

If a team is leading an opponent by at least 10 runs after five complete innings or after 4 and a half innings if the home team has a lead of ten runs after the visiting team has completed its fourth turn at bat, the game shall be declared over and the team with the lead declared the winner.

15. PITCHING RULES

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PITCHES FOR ALL PLAYERS IN THIS DIVISION IS 55 UNTIL APRIL 1.*

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

12 yr old and over - 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 rest threshold. By way of example, if the pitcher starts a batter having thrown 33 pitches and finishes that same batter with 38 pitches, his days of rest threshold reverts to 35 pitches and the player would be required to observe 1 calendar day of rest.

MANAGERS PLEASE NOTE: WHEN DETERMINING A PLAYER'S 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 game at the pitching position.

*It is NBBA's position that player safety and avoiding arm injuries due of excessive pitching is of paramount importance, thus pitchers playing for NBBA teams are limited to 55 pitches in all games played prior to April 1, whether games are played pursuant to these rules or another league's rules. The Division Coordinator shall have the right to request that any manager produce a copy of his team's pitching log to ensure that teams are complying with all portions of this rule.

**During Playoffs, 13 and 14 year old pitchers may pitch up to 95 pitches in a single game.

16. COURTESY RUNNERS

One courtesy runner may be used after the second out of an inning is recorded and may be used for either the pitcher or the catcher ONLY. The courtesy runner shall be the player who made the last recorded out in the inning. If both the pitcher and catcher are on base, priority for use of the Courtesy Runner should be given to the catcher.

17. INTENTIONAL WALKS:

While permissible, in the interest of fair play, intentional walks are discouraged. If an intentional walk is issued, notwithstanding any Major League Baseball rule to the contrary, the pitcher MUST make the actual pitches and they will be tallied against the pitcher's pitch count. If a team in this division is playing in a league or tournament which permits intentional walks without requiring pitches to be thrown, the pitches will not be counted against the pitcher's count, unless the team is playing another Newport Beach Baseball Association team, in which case, pitches will be counted against the pitcher's count.

18. MUST AVOID RULE:

There is no "must slide" rule in Pony play. A runner must make an attempt to avoid contact. The fact that contact is made is not determinative, if the player attempted to avoid contact.

- a. There shall be no *collisions* between base runners and defensive players. In all cases, without exception, the runner shall attempt to avoid a collision.
- b. If the runner makes more than incidental contact with a defensive player, or intentionally makes contact with a defensive player, the runner shall be declared out. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the contact was more than incidental and unintentional, the runner shall be ejected from the game.
- c. Should the umpire determine, in his judgment, that there was intent to injure on the part of the runner, in addition to the ejection, there will be an automatic one (1) game suspension that accompanies such an ejection and the incident will be reviewed and the player's fitness to return will be determined by the Board of Directors.
- d. If the runner slides or runs past a base to avoid a collision because the defensive player is blocking access to the base without possession of the ball or without the ball directly en route to the defensive player and about to arrive at this 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. or any additional base(s) the umpire believes the runner would have reached but for the interference of the defensive player.

19. LEGAL AND ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT (BATS)

At the request of the umpire, teams shall line up all bats intended for use outside the dugouts 15 minutes before the game so that umpire can check them.

Bat rules will be as specified in the current PONY National rule book found at www.pony.org or as published.

Penalties for use of illegal and decertified bats shall be as follows:

- a. A bat found during an umpire's check to be illegal shall be removed from the game. No other penalty shall apply.
- b. If use of an illegal bat is detected after a player arrives in the batter's box but before the first pitch of an at bat, the bat shall be removed from the game. No out will be recorded, but a substitute batter or the next batter in the lineup shall complete the turn at bat. Both the player's manager and the player using the illegal bat shall be removed from the game immediately and are suspended from the team's next game as well.
- c. If use of an illegal bat is detected after the first pitch of an at bat (whether the ball is put in play or not), the batter shall be declared out and no base runner shall advance. The player's manager and the player using the illegal bat shall be removed from the game immediately and both shall be suspended from the team's next game as well.

20. MANAGER'S 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.