

Difference Between Little League and PONY baseball

LAMY Pony baseball is the largest youth baseball organization in the South Bay/Peninsula region. As a result, LAMV is able to offer two separate age level teams in the younger divisions – for example Mustang 1 for 9 year olds and Mustang 2 for 10 year olds. In addition, other baseball leagues are forced to travel farther for regular season games or play 3-4 games per season against the same team, LAMY Pony annually assembles 8-12 teams per division. The Shetland to Bronco divisions play on baseball fields in Los Altos and Mountain View.

In terms of playing baseball, the primary features that distinguish Pony baseball from Little League baseball are those of a two-year **age bracket system and scaled diamonds**. Additionally, Pony teaches lead offs and base stealing starting at age 9 (Mustang Division), or earlier while pitchers learn pick off moves and holding runners on base to counter the potential steal.

In organizations such as Little League player age can differ by as much as 3 years within a division. As a result, the younger players, because of their lack of maturity, ability and size, find it hard to communicate with the older players. They often find themselves spending a disproportionate amount of time on the bench and may feel disconnected from their team. Shetland through Mustang 2 teams consist of players of the same age and grade level. The Bronco and Pony divisions have a two year age bracket. With players closer in age, as is the case with Pony baseball, it is far easier to permit every player to play more positions since the difference in skills within the age groups is not that great.

In addition, Pony baseball scales the size of the diamonds to match the physical capabilities of the players within each division. The base and pitching dimensions for Pony baseball are:

- 50 ft bases for Shetland 5 & 6 year olds
- 55 ft bases and 38 ft pitching for Pinto 7 & 8 year olds
- 60 ft bases and 44 ft pitching for Mustang 9 & 10 year olds
- 70 ft bases and 48 ft pitching for Bronco 11 & 12 year olds
- 80 ft bases and 54 ft pitching for Pony 13 & 14 year olds

These base dimensions are the result of **extensive experimentation** to determine the size on which players of each age group can properly play the game of baseball. Pitching distance is also scaled to the ability of the player and in proportion to the size of the diamond.

The scaled diamonds allow the players to make the plays made by major leaguers. Home runs become a possibility. Outfielders can play in a position proportionate to that played by a major leaguer. The double play, squeeze play and various strategies and tactics, difficult for adults and nearly impossible for youngsters on a full size diamond, become a probability rather than impossibility.

Comparison: Pony League Baseball and Little League Baseball

	Pony league	Little league
Two Year Age groups	Yes	No
Scaled Age Appropriate Diamonds	Yes	No
Scaled Age Appropriate Pitching Distances	Yes	No
Play by Major League Rules	Yes	No
Mix of Softball and MLB Rules	No	Yes
Limit 5-6 year olds to T Ball Only	No	Yes
Limit 7-8 year olds to Coach/Machine pitch	No	Yes
Competitive baseball starting at age 7	Yes	No
7-8 year olds sit out a maximum of one inning per game	Yes	No
Challenges Kids at every age group	Yes	No
Drafting up or down during season	No	Yes
Teaches base stealing earlier	Yes	No
Teaches Pitching sooner	Yes	No
Teaches Leading off Sooner	Yes	No
Prepares kids for Highschool Baseball	Yes	No