

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.

BRONCO DIVISION

In this division, the size of the diamond is increased. Broncos move up to 70-foot base paths with a 50-foot pitching distance. Eleven and 12 year olds play Bronco. Certain 10 year olds are permitted to play in this division

The following Rules are in addition to the basic MLB baseball rules and as contained in the Pony League Rulebook. In the event of a conflict, THESE Rules supersede. In the absence of a contravening rule here, the MLB rules as modified only by the Pony rule book apply.

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 supplying four (4) new approved baseballs for each game.
 - 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 be allotted ten (10) minutes of on field practice starting 15 minutes before the scheduled game time.
 - d. **NO** on field batting practice permitted.

2. **FIELD PREP:** The home team is responsible for dragging the infield areas and watering the field after each game.

3. **UNIFORM:**
 - a. Each player shall be permanently assigned a uniform number at the beginning of the season. Players' names may be affixed to the back of the jersey.
 - b. No team shall make changes to the league issued uniforms. Unauthorized changes will result in discipline of the manager and the team may be penalized. Player purchased pants should match the team's official colors as directed by the manager or Division Coordinators. A player may buy and wear his own fitted cap as long as it has the same color and logo as the league issued cap.
 - c. Metal cleats are permitted in the Bronco division.

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.
- 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 at EACH and every at bat for the 9th batter's spot 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 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 lineup and must do so as the last batter. At no time is the player ineligible to enter the game.
- d. **A player must not bat last in the batting order in consecutive games. (Note: This means that a player set to bat second to last must be moved to a higher position in the batting order if the player scheduled to bat last fails to appear for a game and the player who was to have bat second to last was the last batter in the game immediately prior.)**

5. **MANDATORY PLAYING TIME:**

- a. Each player must play a **MINIMUM** of three (3) innings on defense.
- b. 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.
- c. **NO PLAYER WILL SIT ON THE BENCH IN CONSECUTIVE INNINGS.**
- d. No player shall sit more than two (2) innings in a game until and unless all players have sat out at least one inning.
- e. Each player must play one (1) complete inning in the infield each game

6. **REGULAR SEASON TIME LIMITATIONS (TIME RULES):**

- a. Each game shall be a maximum of seven (7) innings in duration, unless the game is tied, in which case the game will continue until a winner is decided, subject to

- time and darkness restrictions.
- b. There is a 10-run mercy rule. If a team is up by 10 or more runs after the losing team has had five (5) turns at bat then the game shall end
 - c. No new inning may be started after two hours and fifteen minutes (2:15) **from the actual starting time of the game**. There is no "drop dead" rule for time. All innings that are started must be completed. At the beginning of each game, the managers and the umpire should agree upon the time at which the game commences. Where there is any question or dispute as to the official start time, the umpire's ruling governs. The two hour and fifteen minute (2:15) limitation period shall not include game delays (as determined by the umpire). If a game is stopped due to rain and lighting, it is a suspended game.
 - d. A game tied after two hours and fifteen minutes (2:15) or which cannot continue due to darkness shall end in a tie.
 - e. An official game is defined in the National Pony League Rules. No game shall end until the losing team has had five turns at bat. Games stopped due to rain and/or darkness are suspended games. When suspended games are resumed, all players on the rosters from that game may be used, but pitchers previously removed from the mound in the game may not re-enter as a pitcher in the resumed game. Players not present when the suspended game was stopped but in attendance when it is resumed must bat after all players previously present in the suspended game have batted once in the resumed game.
 - f. Postponed and suspended games must resume as soon as the schedule permits.
 - g. The game schedule is subject to change and may be altered by the Bronco Division Coordinator and/or the League President for rain-outs, suspensions, other makeups, etc. as he, she or they determine(s).

7. **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"
- d. If an ineligible bat is used or is deemed illegal, **IT IS AN AUTOMATIC OUT**

8. **THROWING THE BAT:** Any player who, after one warning, throws the bat while batting may be ejected from the game in the interests of player safety.

9. **STEALING:** Stealing and leading off is always permitted.

10. **PLAYER EJECTION:** Any player who is ejected from a game for game play or related conduct will be subject to a review of the play or conduct by the Division Coordinator who may impose an additional suspension. A player ejected from games twice during a single season shall be suspended from the team's next game and for up to three (3) games (and shall not practice

with the team during the time of suspension) following review by and ruling of the NBBA President and 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 by the NBBA Board.

11. **PITCHING RESTRICTIONS:**

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PITCHES FOR ALL PLAYERS ACROSS ALL DIVISIONS 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

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.

12. **DROPPED THIRD STRIKE:** The dropped third strike rule applies.
13. **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.**
14. **HIT BY PITCH/HIT BATTERS:** If a single pitcher hits three (3) batters during a game the pitcher must be removed from the mound.
15. **MUST AVOID RULE (Per PONY):**
 - 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.
16. **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 team members are present.
17. **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 and any player who pitched in the game for 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.

18. **RAINOUTS:** Rainouts may be rescheduled at this level and every reasonable effort will be made to rescheduled rained out games. As long as the teams do not have back to back games a rained out game should be rescheduled at soonest available playing day.

19. **PROTESTS:** 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.

20. **PLAYOFFS:** The higher seed gets choice of home or visitor in for first game only. Thereafter, a coin toss determines home or visiting team.

LENGTH OF PLAYOFF GAMES/REGULATION GAME: Each game shall be seven (7) innings in duration. There is a 10 run mercy rule in effect after the losing team has had a minimum of 5 at bats. In the event of a tie after 7 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.

21. **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 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 waive 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 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 every 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 exclude normally rostered players or reduce their playing time. Violations of this rule will result in managerial suspension which may include multiple games. **NOTE FOR BRONCO DIVISION ONLY:** Player safety being a major concern, a nine year old playing in the Mustang division is NOT eligible to be placed on the Pool Player list without the specific consent of the Division Coordinator AND either the Board President or the Player Agent. The Division Coordinator must maintain a list of all nine year olds eligible for Bronco through the Free Agency Player Pool.

22. **MANAGER 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.