



## Central Ohio Baseball Recreational Association

### C.O.B.R.A.

PONY LEAGUE RULES (2023)

Version 5.0

2/10/2023

All rules not addressed herein are implied to conform to the current official OHSAA High School Baseball Rules Book.

#### PLAYING RULES

##### **1. AGE GROUPS**

Jr Pony (14U): Players must meet one of the following criteria: Currently attending school as an 8th grade student or lower; OR be 14 Years of age on the age delineation date. This date is chosen by the community as long as the date of age delineation falls between Jan 1st and May 1st of the calendar season.

Pony (16U): Players must meet one of the following criteria: Currently attending school as a Sophomore student or lower; OR 16 Years of age on the age delineation date. This date is chosen by the community as long as the date of age delineation falls between Jan 1st and May 1st of the calendar season.

Sr Pony (18U): Players must meet one of the following criteria: Currently attending school as a Senior student or lower; OR 18 Years of age on the age delineation date. This date is chosen by the community as long as the date of age delineation falls between Jan 1st and May 1st of the calendar season.

##### **2. MINIMUM PLAY**

- All players must play a minimum of two (2) innings, (with both of those innings being played within the first four innings) of each game in a defensive position.
- The batting lineup will consist of all players present at the start of the game. Any player arriving after the start of the game will be placed at the end of the batting order. Unless there is an injury preventing a player from continuing play, no other changes to the batting lineup are permitted once the game begins. All players listed in the batting order must bat before the leadoff man takes his next turn.



- Teams must have at least 7 players to start the game. In the event a team cannot field seven eligible players, that team must forfeit the game.

*Note: If agreed to by both coaches, the game may continue to be played with shared players, but the forfeit is still recorded as the result regardless of the game's final outcome.*

### 3. EQUIPMENT

- Cleats: Metal cleats are permitted on natural grass/dirt field but are NOT permitted to be worn on artificial turf fields.
- Catchers must use an appropriate Catcher's Mitt as it is part of the standard equipment. No other glove will be permitted
- Bat Rule: participants must use a BBCOR -3 Bat. No other bats will be permitted except wood bats.

Administration of this rule is the responsibility of the coaches along with the players and parents. If illegal equipment is found being used, the first offense will result in the batter being called out; the 2<sup>nd</sup> offense during the game will result in the player being ejected from the game; the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense during the game will result in the team forfeiting the game and the coach and player will be subject to further disciplinary recommendations to the local community association by the COBRA Board.

### 4. TIME LIMITS

- A regular game is schedule to play 7 innings. However, no new inning will start after 2 hours of play for a single game or 1:45 for both games of a double header. (Same teams in consecutive games) The official game start time will be agreed to by the coaches and umpires in the pre-game meeting and recorded in the official score book.
- Any inning started will be completed.
- Coaches and umpires must manage start time, warm up time in between innings, and warm up time in between games to maximize play and ensure games start on time
- **There will be a maximum time of one minute allowed between innings**
- Courtesy runner for pitcher and catcher are encouraged but not required provided that teams must use the player that recorded the last out.
- Courtesy runners can only be used when there are two outs. If the pitcher or catcher is replaced by a courtesy runner, that player(s) must play that position starting the following inning.
- If the replacement runner is not ready, the umpire may continue play.

*During the end of season tournament, this rule may be suspended by the COBRA Board.*



## 5. RUN RULE

- If a 10 run or greater differential exists after the LOSING team has batted in their half of the FIFTH or SIXTH inning, the game is over.
- There will be a 7 run limit per inning except for 7<sup>th</sup> inning which will be unlimited

## 6. UNIFORM

- The Pony League uniform will consist of the League supplied hat and shirt along with appropriate baseball pants
- Pants other than white are permitted as long as they are baseball pants. Examples of pants that are not permitted: Shorts, Cutoffs, Jeans, Sweatpants, Yoga, Khaki etc
- Players are encouraged to wear the uniform hat but it is not required to be worn

*Coaches are responsible for administering this rule.*

- Pitchers are not permitted to wear WHITE or GRAY sleeves under their jersey.
- Only prescription sunglasses may be worn by pitchers
- All players must wear protective equipment including supporter and cup when playing catcher.

## 7. THE FIELD

Jr Pony (14U): Pitching mound at 54' Bases at 80'

Pony (16U): Pitching mound at 60'- 6" Bases at 90'

Sr Pony (18U): Pitching Mound at 60'-6" Bases at 90'

## 8. PITCHING RULES

- Pitchers are permitted to pitch a maximum of four (4) innings per game

EXCEPTION: In the event of a double header of a regular season game, the following applies

- A pitcher may not pitch more than seven (7) innings per day.
- These 7 innings CAN be all in one game or broken up between the two games. (Example: Game 1, 5 innings and Game 2, 2 innings)
- A pitched ball constitutes an inning pitched
- Pitchers will have a maximum of twelve (12) innings per week, regardless of the number of games scheduled or re-scheduled in a week.
- A pitching week begins on MONDAY and runs through SUNDAY.
- Coaches are responsible for administering this rule.



- Violation of pitching rules (inning limits) will result in a forfeit for the game in which the violation occurred and a recommendation from the COBRA board to the community association of a one game suspension for the head coach.
- Any subsequent violations will result in recommendation from the COBRA board to the community association for the removal of the head coach.
- If a balk is called on the field, the umpire will issue a 1 balk warning per pitcher per game, for the second offense by that pitcher, all balk rules will be enforced.
- Coaches must remove the pitcher under the following conditions;  
Upon their 2<sup>nd</sup> trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher  
Upon their 3<sup>rd</sup> trip to the mound in the same game to the same pitcher  
After 3 batters are hit by the same pitcher in the game.
- Pitchers **will not** be allowed to re-enter at the pitching position once they have been removed.

## 9. PLAY AT A BASE or HOME PLATE (Obstruction vs Interference)

### Collisions and sliding

- 1) A runner attempting to score may not deviate from his direct pathway to the plate in order to initiate contact with the catcher, or otherwise initiate an avoidable collision. If, in the judgment of the umpire, a runner attempting to score initiates contact with the catcher in such a manner, the umpire shall declare the runner out (regardless of whether the catcher maintains possession of the ball). In such circumstances, the umpire shall call the ball dead, and all other base runners shall return to the last base touched at the time of the collision. If the runner slides into the plate in an appropriate manner, he shall not be adjudged to have violated this rule
- 2) Unless the catcher is in possession of the ball, the catcher cannot block the pathway of the runner as he is attempting to score. If, in the judgment of the umpire, the catcher without possession of the ball blocks the pathway of the runner, the umpire shall call or signal the runner safe. Notwithstanding the above.
- 3) It shall not be considered a violation of this Rule if the catcher blocks the pathway of the runner in a legitimate attempt to field the throw (e.g., in reaction to the direction, trajectory or the hop of the incoming throw, or in reaction to a throw that originates from a pitcher or drawn-in infielder addition, a catcher without possession of the ball shall not be adjudged to violate this Rule if the runner could have avoided the collision with the catcher (or other player covering home plate) by sliding.
- 4) If a runner does not engage in a bona fide slide, and initiates (or attempts to make) contact with the fielder for the purpose of breaking up a double play, he should be called for interference under this Rule
- 5) A runner who engages in a “bona fide slide” shall not be called for interference under this Rule, even in cases where the runner makes contact with the fielder as a consequence of a permissible slide. In addition, interference shall not be called where a



runner's contact with the fielder was caused by the fielder being positioned in (or moving into) the runner's legal pathway to the base. Notwithstanding the above, a slide shall not be a "bona fide slide" if a runner engages in a "roll block," or intentionally initiates (or attempts to initiate) contact with the fielder by elevating and kicking his leg above the fielder's knee or throwing his arm or his upper body. If the umpire determines that the runner violated this Rule the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter-runner out. Note, however, that if the runner has already been put out then the runner on whom the defense was attempting to make a play shall be declared out.

## **10. GAME RESULTS**

- During the Regular Season all games are considered as "won", "lost", "tied", "suspended" or may be "protested" if a blatant and severe violation of these rules, the Ohio High School Athletic Association rules or COBRA structure document occurs that cannot be resolved by the umpire during the game to the offended team head coach's satisfaction. The COBRA board will review any protested game and determine the outcome.
- Forfeited games will record a score of 1-0 as the outcome regardless if the game is actually played.

## **11. POSTPONED GAMES BEFORE THEY START**

- Coaches hosting games are responsible for determining if the game can be played or if the umpire deems the conditions are not playable, he may rule to postpone a game that has not started or suspend a game that has started.

## **12. GAMES POSTPONED AFTER THEY HAVE STARTED**

- The maximum number of innings for a regular season game is 7. However, 4 complete innings (3.5 with the home team ahead in score) is recorded as a complete game.
- Games that are stopped prior to meeting these criteria, have not exceeded the time limits not including weather delays and are stopped for any reason including weather, lightning, or field conditions are ruled "Suspended".
- If the game is suspended due to weather a max of 20 min is added to the end of the game time.
- If the game is suspended due to lightning, The game may not continue until a minimum of 30 minutes has passes since the last visible lightning occurrence
- Games suspended by weather are considered complete and official if 4 innings have been played (3½ if the home team is winning).
- Games suspended if fewer than 4 innings have been played (3½ if the home team is winning) are subject to the following:



- a. If fewer than that has been played during the regular season, the game will be considered “rained out.” and may be scheduled to continue on a later date starting from the game condition at the time of suspension. (See 12a below for instructions for resuming a game) or may be conceded (Take the loss) by the team with the fewest runs at the time of suspension.
- b. If a rain out occurs after the 4th inning and a partial inning is played, the final score is determined by the last complete inning.

*The Inning starts as soon as the last out was recorded*

### **12a. RESUMING A SUSPENDED GAME:**

- Should a game be suspended, coaches and umpires will need to determine the following; Score, Inning, Outs, Count on the Batter and Base Runners and Time of Play (Example: if the game starts at 8:00 PM and the game is suspended at 8:52 PM, time of play is determined to be 52 minutes).
- When a suspended game is completed, it shall be continued from the point of suspension with batting orders the same.
- For the game that was suspended, the pitcher cannot pitch more than 4 innings total. Under no circumstance shall a pitcher not pitch more than 7 innings in a single day.
- Any player that was not at the 1st part of the suspended game should be added at the bottom of the batting order.
- If the game was suspended after the last batter in the order and a new player arrives for the completion of the game, the batting order will start at the 1<sup>st</sup> batter in the order.
- If a player is not available for the completion of the suspended game, that batter shall be removed from the line up and his position in the batting order shall be skipped at no penalty (an out is not recorded).
- Should a player that was at the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the suspended game show up after the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the game has begun, you will reinsert them in their original position in the batting order
- Any game that cannot be continued by the end of the season, will be considered “incomplete” and not included in the final standings.

\*Any situation not addressed in these rules will be determined by utilizing the COBRA Structure document and/or Ohio High School Rules. Conflicts and clarifications may be appealed to the COBRA Board



### **13. PLAYOFF RULES**

- COBRA will make every possible attempt to play ALL playoff games at 7 innings per contest with the following exception

*If a 10 run or greater differential exists after the LOSING team has batted in their half of the FIFTH or SIXTH inning, the game is over.*

- If the game is tied at the end of 7 innings, additional games will be played until an outcome is determined.

**ALL RULES in this Document are subject to change through a unanimous affirmative Vote by the COBRA Board**