



Rules and Format

as of May 21st, 2025

We adhere to the PONY BASEBALL Rules, unless otherwise noted.

Home team will be determined by a coin flip prior to the game, with the team winning the flip getting its choice. Home team provides the official scorekeeper. There is no dugout rule, take whichever dugout is available.

https://cdn1.sportngin.com/attachments/document/9da7-2695417/2025_PONY_Baseball_Rulebook.pdf

You must turn in your roster prior to your first game (electronically to unlimited@mvpb.org)

Rosters

Each tournament, all participating teams will be required to submit a signed roster prior to the start of their first game. If a team is found to be playing with an illegal player, the player(s) will be removed immediately, and the team will be ineligible to advance in a playoff game in that tournament. The reason there is no disqualification is because that would affect other teams in the tournament, costing them games. Players may not play for or be on the roster for two teams in the same division. The roster maximum is 15 players.

Field Dimensions

Bases: 6u 50', 7u: 60', 8u: 60', 9u: 60', 10u: 60', 11u: 70', 12u: 70', 13u: 80', 14u: 80'

Pitcher's Mound: 6u 38', 7u: 38', 8u: 40', 9u: 46', 10u: 46', 11u: 50', 12u: 50', 13u: 54', 14u: 54'

Game Length

No new inning will begin after 1:30 for 6u-12u and after 1:40 for 14u. There is NO drop dead time. Any inning started will be played to completion, or until a winner is determined (i.e. home team is leading, is at bat, and time limit has passed).

Games will be a maximum of 6 innings in pool play (7 innings for 14u). No extra innings will be played in pool play, even if time remains. The game will end in a tie. In playoff games, a winner must be determined. If a playoff game (other than the championship) is tied



after time expires, or the designated number of innings have been played, up to two extra innings will be played. If still tied after two extra innings, a California tie-breaker will be used...a runner (the last batted out of the previous inning) will be placed at 2nd base to begin the inning and the inning will be played out from there. This will be done each inning until a winner is determined. The championship game will be played out without use of the California tiebreaker.

Lineup

Teams may bat 9, 10 or entire roster. Anyone in batting lineup is considered “in” the game and can be inserted or removed from any defensive position. If any player (starter or reserve) is removed from the batting lineup for a substitute, for any reason, that player may re-enter at any time, as long as it is in the same spot in the batting order.

If batting the entire lineup and a player is removed due to injury, there is no penalty when the spot comes up. However, the player may not return to the game. If the injury occurs during an at-bat in progress and the team is batting the entire lineup, the last out will finish that at bat. If not batting the entire lineup and there is no substitute to replace the injured player, an out will be recorded. If the umpire deems that a team is feigning injury to gain an advantage, he can call an out when the injured spot comes up.

If a spot is made vacant due to ejection, and there is no substitute to fill it, an out will be recorded each time it comes up. While a substitute is tied to another player and that spot in the lineup, a sub may fill a defensive position for an injured player that has no sub to take his/her spot. A team may play with any number of players; however, outs will be recorded for any missing players, up to nine (i.e. play with seven players, two outs will be recorded each time through the lineup). Note: The team playing short may designate on the lineup card where the outs will fall. Players arriving late will be permitted to enter one of the “out” spots. We want to avoid forfeits, if at all possible.

Pitching

There are no pitching restrictions. Coaches are expected to use common sense in protecting the arms of their young players. A pitcher cannot be removed and return to the mound in the same game. A pitcher is considered “in the game” if that player throws one warm up pitch from the mound. We recommend following MLB’s “Pitch Smart” Guidelines.

Balks

There are no balks in 6u, 7u & 8u. At the 9u and 10u levels, balks will only be called after a warning has been given to that pitcher. A balk will always be called if it leads to an out for the hitting team (i.e. stopping motion and throwing out base stealer).

At 11u level, umpires may call any balk, but are encouraged to issue one warning for balks that do not create a clear advantage.

At 12u, 13u and 14u, umpires will exercise strict adherence to balk rules. The “fake-to-third” by a pitcher, who does not first step off the rubber, is a balk.



Protests

Protests are only allowed for an umpire's rules interpretation, not for judgment calls. Protests cost \$100, due at time of protest, and will be resolved immediately by tournament director. \$100 is returned following successful protest only.

Special Pinch Runners

Special pinch runners are allowed at any time for the pitcher currently in the game or the next inning's catcher. Special pinch runners are mandatory for next inning's catcher with two outs. Special pinch runner may be any player not currently in the lineup. If batting entire roster, special pinch runner must be last out recorded.

Intentional Walks

To intentionally walk a hitter, no pitches need to be thrown. A manager simply needs to notify the umpire. An intentional walk can take place at any point during an at-bat.

Slide and Avoid

Base runners are expected to slide or avoid collisions. If, in the view of the umpire, a base runner does not slide or avoid a collision when there is a play on him, he will be called out. Malicious "plowing" of a defensive player will result in ejection from the game and could result in suspension of the offending player for the next game.

Bats

Wooden, metal, graphite or ceramic bats manufactured for baseball play, which are round and not more than two and five eighths' inches in diameter at the thickest part, not more than 42 inches in length, are acceptable. No bat shall be used if dented, cracked, modified, or misshaped. The bat's knob may be solid or hollowed to house an embedded metric sensor. If a sensor is used, it shall (1) not affect performance; (2) be secured by a locking mechanism and a back-up mechanism to keep it in place; and (3) have a distinguishing "off-line" mode to prevent data from being accessed during a game.

1. Bats manufactured specifically for use in tee ball, shall not be used when the ball is pitched by a player, coach, or pitching machine, unless using a Level 5 or less safety ball.
2. Coach-pitch bats will only be used in coach-pitch using a safety ball. Penalty: removal of the bat only. (Not subject to rule 18-E-7(a), (b) and (c). If using a tee ball bat manufactured prior to 2018, these bat must carry the USA Baseball mark accompanied by the following text: "Only For Use With Approved Tee Ball Bat." If you already have a tee ball bat you would like to continue using, all you have to do is purchase a USA Bat sticker directly from USABB and place it on your bat.
3. In conjunction with USA Baseball and its other participating national member organizations, PONY Baseball has adopted the new USA Baseball bat standard (USA Bat). Effective January 1, 2018, with the exception of the -3 bat (BBCOR certified), all other 2- $\frac{5}{8}$ inch minus factor bats (-5, -7, -9, etc.) and 2- $\frac{1}{4}$ " bats must be certified with the USA Bat licensing stamp on the bat in order to be used for league and tournament play. 2- $\frac{1}{4}$ " BARREL bats are legal in all divisions of PONY Baseball except 16U



4. 2- $\frac{5}{8}$ " barrel bats are legal in all division of PONY Baseball. If a 2- $\frac{5}{8}$ " bat is -3, it must be BBCOR certified (stamped on the bats). Effective January 1, 2018, all other minus factor bats (-5, -7, -9, etc.) Must be certified with USA Bat licensing mark stamped on the bat.
5. 2- $\frac{3}{4}$ " barrel bats are prohibited in all divisions of PONY Baseball.
6. 16U™ are only allowed to use WOOD BATS for this tournament.
7. Any age/player can use a wood bat

Special Rules

There will be 90 seconds between half innings. Hustle in, hustle out. Repeated violation of this rule can result in penalties of balls or strikes issued to first hitter, depending on offending team. Visits to the mound will be limited to two for any given pitcher per game, without removal of the pitcher. On the third visit for any given pitcher, the player must be replaced. Stalling will not be permitted. If, in the umpire's opinion, a manager is stalling, the umpire may refuse to allow a visit, make a player step in the box, etc. to keep the game moving. Please attempt to get in as many innings as possible and maintain integrity to the game.

Metal spikes are prohibited in 6u, 7u, 8u, 9u, 10u and 11u. They are allowed in 12u and 14u. In divisions that metal spikes are prohibited, a player coming to bat (stepping in the batter's box) with metal spikes will immediately be called out. A player taking the field with metal spikes will have to be immediately replaced until spikes are removed. If no sub is available, team will play short until spikes are changed. When portable mounds are used, metal spikes are not allowed to be used while pitching.

Rules Specific to 6u MP

PLAYING FIELDS:

1. Pitching Distance: 38 feet (Machine Pitch).
2. Distance between bases: 50 Feet.
3. A 2-foot vertical line will be drawn halfway between each base to assist the umpire in determining where to place the runner when a batted ball is dead.

OFFICIAL SCORED GAMES:

4. Before a new inning begins, it is strongly advised that both Managers check the score and confirm accuracy. It is imperative that coaches stay close to the score and ensure its accuracy for duration of the game.
5. The HOME team will be responsible for reporting the final score once game has concluded. Please get the score reported immediately after the game.

GAME DURATION/TIME LIMIT/OTHER:

6. Games will be played 5 innings. No new inning after 1hr 30mins. Time limits are based off official start time of game, which is determined by umpire, make sure you ask umpire before the game begins what the official start time is.
7. No team shall score more than (5) runs per inning, for the first 4 innings. If there are less than three outs when 5 runs are scored, the teams shall change sides. **Exception:** A home run over the fence shall score all runners ahead of the batter.



8. The 5th inning is OPEN – meaning that 3 outs must be recorded to change sides, there is no max run limit.

9. **MERCY RULE:**

If the visiting team is leading by 15 runs at the end of 3 complete innings or 10 runs at the end of 4 or more complete innings, the game shall be declared complete, and the visiting team shall be declared the winner.

If the home team is leading by 15 runs at the end of 3 complete innings or 10 runs after the visiting team has completed batting in the 4th inning or later, the game shall be declared complete, and the home team shall be declared the winner.

EQUIPMENT:

10. The Louisville Slugger UPM 45 and the UPM 50 Pitching Machines are the Official PONY Baseball Pitching Machine for Shetland division and is the only pitching machine approved for Shetland play.
11. Safety baseballs, both leather and vinyl are the baseballs required. Tournament Directors shall have the final approval on all game balls. MANDATORY: Flexi Ball-Level 5 for Shetland and Level 10 for Shetland are approved.
12. All bats must have the USA Bat licensing stamp on it to be used in PONY baseball. Tee Ball bats are permitted. USSSA bats are ILLEGAL AND NOT ALLOWED. If an illegal bat is found during the game that batter will be ruled out, the manager will be ejected from game and subject to further discipline – up to and including suspension. There will be no forfeit of any games as a result of this rule.

SHETLAND PITCHING:

13. Pitching Machine ONLY. Recommended settings for the machine: Power Lever = 2: Micro Adjust = 3: Release Block = 4. Settings may be adjusted by the Tournament Director to achieve a good strike pitch at a reasonable speed for tournament play. The offensive team may adjust the Micro Adjust screw to adjust the height of the ball and may adjust the base arm of the machine to adjust inside/outside unless the base is permanently mounted to the ground.
14. The player fielding the pitcher's position shall take a position five (5) feet to the rear of the pitching machine and 3 feet to the left or right.
15. If a batted ball strikes the coach pitcher, the ball is dead, the pitch counts as a foul strike and no runners shall advance.
16. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory, the ball is in play. If the deflected ball hits a runner in fair territory, he/she is not out, and the ball is live and in play.
17. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and goes into foul territory, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base and all runners advance one base.
18. The coach who is feeding the pitching machine may give coaching instructions to batters and baserunners however may not in any way interfere with the defensive players. The coach pitcher must operate the machine in accordance with the operation manual.



19. If a live ball hits the coach operating the pitching machine, or in the umpire's judgment the coach interferes in the fielders attempt to make a play, the ball is dead, and the lead runner is out. If in the umpire's judgment the ball is intentionally thrown at the coach, the ball is dead, and all runners advance one base.

BATTERS:

20. Are not permitted to bunt. (Penalty: The batter shall be called back to the plate, the swing is a foul-strike, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance).
21. **Players waiting to bat shall remain in the dugout until their turn to bat. No player shall be allowed in the "on-deck" circle.**
22. The batter is out if failing to reach base after a maximum of six (6) pitches or after 3 strikes from the coach pitcher feeding the machine. The batter is not out on a foul ball if it is the 6th pitch or any subsequent pitch that is also a foul ball.
23. The batter is out on a foul tip (SEE MLB DEFINITION OF TERMS FOR FOUL TIP) if it is also the 3rd strike regardless of the pitch number. The batter is out on a foul tip if it is the 6th pitch or any subsequent pitch.
24. If the batter unintentionally throws their bat and interferes with the fielders, interference is called, and the batter is out. If the batter throws their bat unintentionally in fair or foul territory, the player and coach can be issued a formal warning. If the player unintentionally throws the bat again after they've been warned, the player will be ruled out and removed from the game. This is absolutely the last scenario we'd want to see play out, but we must prioritize the safety of other players on the field.
25. If the batter throws his bat intentionally, the batter will be removed from game for unsportsmanlike conduct.

RUNNERS:

26. Runners are not permitted to steal or lead off and shall remain in contact with the base until the ball is put in play.
27. On a batted ball runners may advance until an **infielder** has control of the ball in the **infield** or at a base and holds the ball up within **fair territory**. Once the ball becomes dead and in the judgment of the umpire the runner has not gone entirely beyond the halfway point between the bases, the runner will be required to return to the base in which they are coming from. If the runner has both feet beyond the halfway point between bases before the ball is called dead, the runner is awarded base they were advancing to.
28. Baserunners may advance on an overthrow to a base at their own risk.

PLAYING RULES:

29. 10 Minutes prior to game start, the managers and umpires will conduct a home plate meeting to confirm both teams have enough players to play, establish official start time, confirm both coaches have checked for illegal bats, and to address any other questions or inquiries that managers or umpires have at that time.
30. Only person allowed to speak to the umpire is the coach that was at the plate meeting.



31. A minimum team will consist of 8 players. No out shall be recorded in the ninth batting position if only 8 players are present at a game. If more players arrive after the game begins, they will be added to the end of the batting order. Teams without 8 players by 10 minutes past the scheduled start time shall forfeit the game with a score of 5 – 0.
32. If a team is playing with 8 players and one of those players must leave the game due to an injury or illness, that team will forfeit the game with score of 5 – 0.
33. When a player is **PERMANENTLY** removed from the lineup due to injury, sickness, or other, the player will be ruled out when their turn comes up in the batting order only once – then the batting order may collapse for remainder of game, and no further penalty will be observed. The player that was removed from the lineup shall not return to that game in any capacity. ****EXCEPTION**** In event of ejection, it is an automatic out every time that player's turn in the batting order comes up.
34. When a player is **TEMPORARILY** removed from lineup due to injury, sickness, or other, the player's turn in the order will be recorded as an out EACH time their spot in the order comes up to bat – until they return to the game. If at any point it is determined they're unable to return to game, then rule 33 goes into effect and batting order may collapse without further penalty.
- Note – If player was at a time only temporarily removed and already ruled out one time prior to being designated as permanently removed, then the line up may collapse and no further penalty will be observed once permanent designation has been made.**
35. Batting Order: Batting shall be continuous and made from the roster of all players present at the game.
36. A batted ball becomes dead when an infielder has possession and control of the ball in the infield or at a base and holds the ball over their head within fair territory and the umpire calls time. Runners from home to first are awarded first if play is stopped in this manner.
37. Offensive coaches will be stationed in the coach's boxes and as a coach feeding the pitching machine. The fourth coach will be in the dugout or designated area.
38. One defensive coach will be behind the catcher or designated area as directed by the umpire in consultation with the Tournament Director. The other defensive coaches must remain in the dugout or designated area (NOT along the fair/foul lines).
39. Defensive alignment shall consist of Pitcher, Catcher, 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. Teams must have a player at the pitcher and catcher position. Catchers are allowed to defensively field the position. Outfielders will play in the outfield at least 10ft from the infield (halfway in the grass).
40. Coach interference is prohibited (for example, stopping the ball with your foot, rolling, or throwing the ball to the player, swinging the bat for the player, etc.).



Rules Specific 6u, 7u & 8u Machine Pitch

Game Times/Limits; 6 innings or 1:30 no new, no drop dead.

Run Limits; 5 runs max per half inning for the first 5 innings, 6th inning is “open”.

Mercy; 15 after 3 or 10 after 4

Herein are summaries of the Pony Rules;

Only USA stamped bats are allowed.

Teams will bat the roster and employ free substitutions.

6 pitches or 3 strikes makes a batter out. *Note; if the 6th pitch is fouled off, the batter shall receive another pitch. A foul tip on the 3rd strike or on the 6th pitch is an out.

No lead offs or stealing of bases permitted.

THE PITCHING COACH:

- An offensive coach will feed the pitching machine while their team is batting. The coach who is feeding the pitching machine may give coaching instructions to batters and baserunners. However, they may not in any way interfere with the defensive players
- If a batted ball hits the Pitching Coach, the ball is dead. The pitch goes down as a foul ball and no runners may advance.
- If a live ball hits the Pitching Coach, or in the Umpires judgement, the Pitching Coach intentionally interferes with the defense trying to make a play, the ball is dead and the lead runner shall be ruled out.
- If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory the ball is in play. If the deflected ball hits a runner in fair territory, he/she is not out and the ball is live and in play.

The pitching machine can only be adjusted at the top of an inning, and both pitching coaches must agree on the adjustments. 1st offense is a warning, all other offenses result in the batter being call out.

Play stops when the defense controls both the *BALL* and the *RUNNERS*. The Pitching Coach shall not receive the ball until “time” has been called from the Umpire.

If a batted ball hits the pitching machine, play is dead. The batter shall be awarded 1st base, and all runners shall advance one (1) base, even if they are not in the force.

Infield Fly Rule is *NOT* in effect.



Rules Specific 7u and 8u KID Pitch

Stealing: No leading off. Runner must remain in contact with the base until the pitcher releases the ball.

Runners may steal bases, but shall not leave the base they are occupying at the time of the pitch until the pitcher has released the ball. PENALTY: Once the pitcher has stepped on the rubber with possession of the ball, runners who leave base before the pitcher has released the ball and the pitch is hit are out and the ball is in play. If the pitch is not hit the runner must return to the base and the ball is dead, however if the runner is put out trying to steal the out will supersede the dead ball.

Mercy Rule

13 after three innings

10 after four innings

8 after five innings

Format

The format will vary, based on number of team in the division.

Following formats are based on 2-day, 3-game guarantee events.

3 Teams; 2 games to determine seeding, Seed 2 v Seed 3, Seed 1 v Winners play in championship

4 Teams; 2 games to determine seeding, Seed 1 v Seed 4/Seed 2 v Seed 3, Winners play in championship.

5 Teams; 2 games to determine seeding, Seed 4/5 Winner v Seed 1/Seed 2 v Seed 3, Winners play in championship.

6 Teams; Two 3-team brackets; teams play both other teams in bracket. Top seeds from each bracket receive a bye. Seed A2 v Seed B3, Seed B2 v Seed A3; winners play #1 seeds, winners of semi-finals to championship.

7 Teams; Two games to determine seeding. #1 Seed to receive a bye. Seed 2 v Seed 7, Seed 3 v Seed 6, Seed 4 v Seed 5. Winners to semi-finals.

8 Teams; Two games to determine seeding. Top four teams to Gold Bracket. Bottom four teams to Silver Bracket.

9+Teams; Two games to determine seeding. Teams will be broken into a Gold Bracket and a Silver bracket. Which division has how many of each will be determined before the start of play.

All Championships will have time limits, but the limited will be extended per the Directors discretion.



Tie-breaking Procedure

1. Head-to-head Record among all tied teams
2. Runs allowed for all games
3. Run Differential for all games (Max of 8 in any one game)
4. Coin Flip

If a tie is among more than two teams, winner will be determined, then remaining tied teams will return to tiebreaker #1 to determine second-place team.

Metal Spikes are not allowed on any portable mounds.

Ejections

If a coach or player is ejected, they must immediately leave the area for the rest of that game. They will be allowed back the following game such as long as the infraction was not deemed egregious enough to suspend him or her for the entire tournament. Coaches are responsible for the actions of their parents. If a parent is ejected, they must leave the complex for the remainder of the day. As well, the coach may be ejected as well. The tournament director CANNOT overrule an umpire ejection.

ABSOLUTLY NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED AT ANY MVPB TOURNAMENTS. The coach is responsible for their parents adhering to this policy. Drinking or possessing alcohol at any of our tournament locations is an immediate team ejection.

No dogs or animals are allowed at MVPB. No grilling or cooking on the MVPB Property (Parking lot included).

Alterations to Tournament Format

If, for reasons beyond MVPB's control, tournament needs to be altered to finish in a timely manner, Tournament Director reserves the right to change schedule, game lengths, etc. as necessary. Refunds or credits for future tournaments will be given to teams who do not play guaranteed games. Refunds will be \$65 per game not played (i.e. with 3-game guarantee...\$65 refund if you play 2 games; \$130 if you play 1 game). Team can choose \$90 per game credit toward future tournament in place of cash refund. Full refund/credit will be given if no games are played.

