Meadows Place PONY Baseball
Local League Rules 2026 v2

Unless modified by these Local League Rules, all games and league operations will be conducted pursuant to the 2026 Rules and Regulations for PONY Baseball, Inc.

Sportsmanship

- Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Umpires will maintain control and have the authority to eject or remove players, coaches, or fans from the facility. Umpires should not be approached after the game under any circumstances.
- Any manager, coach, player, or fan demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior may be ejected from the game and may be suspended for additional games.
- Razzing, heckling, chanting, or making disparaging remarks or noises directed at opponents in any manner is prohibited. Shakers or noise makers are not allowed.
- Foul and abusive language will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Cursing or throwing equipment is grounds for an automatic ejection.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy for making threats or taking physical action. Any occurrence will be immediately reported to the Board and the proper authorities.

Declared League Age

- As part of the League registration, each player MUST declare a league age (determined by their age on May 1 of the current year for the spring season, or May 1 of the following year for the fall season) for the upcoming season. Once a player determines their league age for the season, they may NOT change their league age for the remainder of that season.
- As permitted by PONY baseball rules, MPPB has adopted the "And Under" player age chart, which will allow players to move up one age division, ONLY under the following conditions:
  1. The player's league age MUST be within 1 year of the age division they wish to move up to.
  2. The player MUST have played at least one full season at the lower division with MPPB (other leagues will not count).
  3. The player's safety and well-being will be a priority for final determining of moving up a division.

Player Draft Process

- Draft day and the draft procedures will be pre-determined by the board prior to the start of the regular season. All coaches or coach representatives shall be present at the player draft. All coaches will receive a list of available players (player's pool).

Game Length/Time Length

- **Shetland Division:** Games shall be a maximum of 3 innings. No inning will start beyond 60 minutes after the official starting time.
- **Pinto, Mustang, & Bronco Divisions:** Games shall be 6 innings. No inning will start beyond the division's prescribed time length below after the official starting time.
  - **Pinto Division:** 1 hour 25 minutes
  - **Mustang Division:** 1 hour 35 minutes

    - **Bronco Division:** 1 hour 45 minutes
- Time begins upon the umpire's notification to the managers. Subsequent innings begin the moment the third out is made (or fifth run scores) in the previous inning. The umpire is the sole judge of time.
- The game is completed when the time limit is reached, and additional play will not change the outcome.
    - If time expires while the home team is batting and winning, the umpire shall announce, "Time has expired, ball game" before the next batter enters the batter's box (not during a player's "at bat").
    - If time expires while the visiting team is batting and is behind in the score and can mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire shall announce, "Time has expired, we will complete the inning."
    - If time expires while the visiting team is batting and winning, and the home team cannot mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire shall announce, "Time has expired, ball game."
- **Pinto, Mustang, & Bronco Divisions:** If a game is tied at the end of regulation and before that division's maximum time length has elapsed, it shall go into extra innings. Games may end in a tie.
- **Mustang & Bronco Divisions:** A maximum of 90 seconds or 5 warm-up pitches – whichever comes first – will be allowed between innings, with time starting on the third out. Automatic strikes may be called on offensive teams not ready, and automatic balls may be called on defensive teams not ready.

Postponed or Canceled Games

- Game play will be suspended when lightning strikes are reported within a 6-mile radius of the game by a weather monitoring website/app approved by the MPPB Board. Game play may resume when lightning moves out of a 6-mile radius. The decision to cancel the game or call a rain delay will be up to the umpire in consultation with the Board Member on Duty on a case-by-case basis.[1]
- If a game is called due to weather or other hazardous conditions, it is an official game if the following number of innings have been completed:
    - **Shetland Division:** 2 ½ innings (home team leading) or 3 innings have been completed.
    - **Pinto, Mustang, & Bronco Divisions:** 3½ innings (home team leading) or 4 innings have been completed.
- Any game that is postponed or canceled that requires to be made up will use the following format to be re-scheduled.
    1. If a game is postponed due to weather, darkness, or any other extenuating circumstances, it shall be resumed at the exact place where it left off. Batting order, runners on base, fielding position, score, etc. shall resume as a continuation from where the game was halted. New "pick-up" players are NOT allowed for the re-scheduled game.
    2. Teams should attempt to reschedule the makeup game for the Home Team's next practice. The Home Team has the option to use either its mandatory practice or its optional practice for this game.
    3. The coaches MUST coordinate with the league's scheduling officer (or president) to determine when the make-up game will be played. This will ensure that umpire(s) can be scheduled for the game and that the game does not conflict with other games or practices.

[1] https://www.uiltexas.org/health/info/lightning-safety
https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2014/4/9/lightning-safety.aspx

4. Should any team fail to show up or have enough players for the re-scheduled game, the game will be called, and the win will go to the team that has enough players and is ready to play.

Run Rules

- **Shetland, Pinto, & Mustang Divisions:** A maximum of 5 runs are allowed per inning per team. Three outs or five runs will constitute an inning for the offensive team.
- **Bronco Division:** A maximum of 5 runs (with continuation) are allowed per inning per team. Once 5 runs have been reached, the inning will be completed once the final play has reached its natural conclusion. Three outs or 5 [8 Max] runs will constitute an inning for the offensive team.
- There is no limit on runs scored during the sixth inning (or later innings).
- The game is called if a team is behind by 15 runs after 3 complete innings, 10 runs after 4 innings, or 8 runs after 5 innings.

Roster

- The following is the minimum number of players for each division that must be present, or the game will be called a forfeit at 10 minutes past the scheduled start time:
    - **Shetland Division:** 5 players minimum
    - **Pinto, Mustang, & Bronco Divisions:** 7 players minimum
- There is no penalty for playing with the minimum number of players.
- The game will be called a forfeit if at any time a team has fewer than the minimum number of eligible players.
- Players who must leave before the end of the game may do so without penalty. Their position in the batting order will be ignored for the rest of the game and no out will be charged.
- If, in the umpire's opinion, a player is unable to continue playing due to injury or illness, the team will not be penalized when it is the missing player's turn to bat.
- Any time the batting order is reduced by an ejection, an automatic out shall be declared in that batting order position.
- Every player present for a game is in the batting order for the duration of the game (Roster Bat).
- Any late arriving player(s) shall assume the last position in the batting order, regardless of when they arrive.
- Players not registered with Meadows Place PONY Baseball and not assigned to the team are ineligible. Players shall not participate in more than one PONY baseball division (i.e., Bronco and Mustang) at the same time. Only players who have played in the respective division are eligible to participate in that division's MPPB All-Star program.
- All players must always wear the proper safety equipment.

Ground Rules

- For games played on the North T-ball Field:
    - The outfield boundaries will be the chain link fence in left field and right field, and the sidewalk in center field.
    - Any ball hit in the air over the fence or sidewalk will be considered an outside-the-park home run.
    - Any batted ball that strikes the ground first and travels past the sidewalk in center field will be considered a Ground Rule Double, and the batter will be placed on second base.

Pick-up Players

- If a team has fewer than 9 players present prior to the start of a game, they may use another "pick-up" player from another team, under the following conditions:
  1. The "pick-up" player(s) MUST be registered MPPB player(s).
  2. The "pick-up" player(s) can ONLY play in the outfield; they cannot play at the pitcher, catcher, or infield positions. The "pick-up" player(s) are allowed to bat but they MUST be put at the bottom of the batting order.
  3. The "pick-up" player(s) may be from the same division or one division lower. Teams are only allowed a maximum of two "pick-up" players. Teams MUST have fewer than 9 players in order to use "pick-up" players. Teams may only use "pick-up" players to put their team at no more than nine players.
  4. If a team is unable to "pick up" players from another team in the same or lower division to have 9 players, they may use up to two players from the opposing team in order to reach 9 defensive players. The "pick-up" players may only be used on defense in the outfield. The players used should be chosen and rotated in such a way as to allow the batting order of the opposing team to continue unhindered.

Coaching

- Teams should have no more than the following number of meetings per week (including games):
  - **Shetland Division:** No more than 2 meetings per week, not to exceed 4 hours total.
  - **Pinto Division:** No more than 3 meetings per week, not to exceed 5 hours total.
  - **Mustang & Bronco Divisions:** No more than 4 meetings per week, not to exceed 8 hours total.
- Managers should exchange line-ups before each game and should discuss ground rules at the umpire's plate conference before the start of each game.
- Once a game starts, the umpire is in complete control; only the team manager is allowed to question a ruling after a time-out is called.
- Judgment calls may not be appealed. An appeal based on the application or enforcement of a rule must be made before the next pitch. After the ball is dead, the coach must request time and ask the umpire who made the call to review the ruling. The coach must identify the rule at issue and explain the specific basis for the appeal. The decision on the appeal is final and may not be appealed or changed.
- Players, managers, and coaches shall remain in the dugouts, on the benches or in the prescribed areas throughout the game. Teams may have no more than four coaches in the dugout at any time.
- For safety, anyone under age 16 who serves as an assistant coach, base coach, or bat boy must wear a batting helmet whenever they are on the field of play or outside the dugout while the ball may become live.
- **Shetland Division:** While on defense, two coaches may be positioned in the outfield to provide verbal instructions to the defensive team.
- The home team is responsible for preparing the field for game play and keeping the official scorebook.
- Scorekeepers or others are not allowed to coach from the stands.
- Wearable or handheld communication devices may be used by coaches, with communications enabled, for the purposes of scorekeeping only. Device use should be limited to dugouts and the coach box in front of the dugout.
- The visiting team should prepare water coolers and trash receptacles for both dugouts and manage the scoreboard, if applicable.

- Both teams are responsible for cleaning up the dugouts, bleachers, and grass areas around the field following their game.
- Parents should never "coach" from the stands or outside the fences. Please allow your team's on-field coaches to do their jobs.
- Pre-game warm-ups should be held in the outfield or common areas. No infield practice is allowed before games.
- No jewelry shall be worn by any player, except for medical identification.
- Dugouts must be cleaned of litter before leaving.
- Tobacco or alcohol in any form is not allowed in dugouts, buildings, stands or playing areas.

Batting

- Walk-up music shall be allowed at the discretion of the umpire. The music should end once the batter enters the batter's box and becomes set. Abuse of this can lead to loss of privilege by the head umpire on the field.
- Only bats approved by PONY Baseball for play at the respective divisions will be allowed to be used. Refer to the official PONY Rule Book for specific approved bats.
- Managers are expected to check each player's equipment prior to each game. Illegal equipment will be removed from the game with no penalty. No bat shall be used if dented, cracked, modified, or misshaped.
- The penalty for throwing a bat is at the umpire's discretion and may include calling the batter out, ejecting the player, or both. If a thrown bat hits a player or official, the batter-runner will be called out. No warning is required. If a warning is issued, it applies once to the entire team.
- For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the pitcher is preparing to deliver the pitch or as the ball is pitched. Coaches shouting instructions to their batters or baserunners may be ejected if this is judged to be disruptive to the pitcher.
- **Shetland Division-Specific Rules:**
    - An appointed coach shall accompany each batter while their team is on offense. This will be the batting coach for the team and will be the umpire in charge for the half inning if league umpires are not available.
    - The batting tee shall be placed on top of home plate, covering home plate, by the batting coach, who is responsible for removal prior to any play at home plate.
    - Only league-approved batting tees are allowed. Only league-approved safety (T-ball) baseballs are allowed, and new balls MUST be used for each game.
    - A batter will be given no more than five swings to hit the ball off the tee. The batter shall be called out after failing to hit the ball after five swings. The batter is not out on a foul or foul tip unless it is a fifth swing.
    - Batters are not allowed to adjust the tee or take practice swings after the ball has been placed on the tee. A practice swing attempt will be considered one of their five allowed swings.
    - Batters are not permitted to bunt at the ball at any time. It is the sole discretion of the umpire to determine whether a valid attempt to swing was made.
    - Teams should make every effort to bat the roster in order; however, there is no penalty for batting out of order.
    - Teams will not be penalized when a player leaves temporarily for a bathroom break or is otherwise temporarily unable to play. When the player returns, the player should bat in the

next available position for that rotation and then return to the original batting-order position in the following rotation.
    - Verbal instructions to batters are permitted, and coaches may help batters position themselves in the batter's box.
    - The penalty for throwing bats is umpire discretion and can result in an out and/or player's ejection. However, umpires will first give a warning and instruction on the proper way to "lay" a bat down after a hit.
    - At the coach's discretion, any player may have the opportunity to hit coach-pitch style during a game. The at-bat must start as a coach-pitch at-bat. The player is given three pitches or strikes – whichever comes first. If on the third swing they fail to hit a fair ball, the ball will then be placed on the tee for the at-bat to continue. If the at-bat is forced back to hitting off a tee, the player will be hitting off the tee with three strikes and will only have two more opportunities to put the ball in play. Latitude will be given to the coach regarding the stance and method of delivering the pitch.
- **Pinto Division-Specific Rules:**
    - Each batter will be allowed a maximum of five pitches (delivered by a coach pitcher). If a foul ball is hit on the fifth pitch, then the player will be allowed to continue batting until he/she does not make contact with the ball or puts the ball in play. Foul tips caught by the catcher are counted as strikes. Five pitches or 3 strikes = 1 out.
    - Batters are not permitted to bunt or soft swing at the ball. If, in the umpire's judgment, a batter soft swings or bunts, the pitch is ruled a strike and the ball is dead.
    - There will be no bases-on-balls or base awarded for a batter hit by a pitch.
    - A fair ball hitting a coach pitcher or coach operating the pitching machine will be declared a foul ball. If, in the umpire's judgment a coach interferes with a fielder's attempt to make a play, the ball is dead, and the lead runner is out.
    - In the case of batting out of order, regular baseball rules apply. The player who should have batted (the proper batter) is called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter is nullified.
    - Intentional walks are not allowed.
- **Kid-Pitch (Mustang & Bronco) Division-Specific Rules:**
    - The batter should always keep one foot in the batter's box in order to speed up play. PENALTY: Umpire will call "play ball" and call the pitch a strike.
    - **Mustang Division:** Squeeze plays are not allowed. With a runner on third, a batter may not fake or attempt a bunt in any way. PENALTY: Both the batter and the third baserunner are declared out.
    - **Bronco Division:** A batter who swings at a pitch on a squeeze play will automatically be called out, all runners will return to the bases and the third base coach will be ejected. For safety reasons, the batter must either take the pitch or bunt the ball when a squeeze play is in progress.
    - **Mustang Division:** The dropped third strike rule is not in effect. A batter will be called out after the third strike regardless of whether the catcher catches the pitch. During specific seasons as determined by the Baseball Commissioner, the Mustang division may reinstitute the dropped third strike rule on a season-by-season basis.
    - Umpires shall not permit more than one offensive time out in each half-inning to allow a manager or coach to talk with a batter.
    - In the case of batting out of order, regular baseball rules apply -- the player who should have batted (the proper batter) is called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter is nullified.

Base Running

- **Shetland, Pinto, and Mustang Divisions:** Head-first slides are not allowed, except for a dive back to a base after an attempted pick-off. Any runner attempting a head-first slide will automatically be ruled out.
- **Shetland, Pinto, and Mustang Divisions:** Any tag above the shoulders of a player will automatically be ruled safe.
- **Bronco Division:** Head-first slides are allowed on all plays. The League may reinstate the ban on head-first slides on a season-by-season basis. Tags above the shoulders are allowed; however, the umpire will determine whether a tag is excessive or malicious and will enforce the applicable penalty under MPPB rules.
- No player shall initiate malicious contact. The question of what is malicious is umpire judgment. PENALTY – The player initiating malicious contact shall be ejected from the game. NOTE: There can be a collision where both players go head over heels and not be considered malicious contact. The key for malicious contact is "intent".
- Slide Rule: Runners advancing to any base with intent to break-up a double play or where a tag play is evident must slide into the base or seek to avoid contact with the player who has the ball. The runner must slide, give up, go around, or go back.
- **Shetland Division-Specific Rules:**
    - When an out is made on a baserunner, the runner must leave the field of play and return to the dugout.
    - An "overthrow" is defined as a thrown ball which is not controlled by a defensive player.
    - On an overthrow, a batter or runner can try to advance only one base. The defense can try to record an out against the runner or batter trying to advance on the overthrow.
    - For balls hit to the outfield, baserunners are not restricted. However, baserunners cannot advance once the ball is in the possession of an infielder and ruled a dead ball by the umpire.
    - The home plate umpire shall declare "Time" when the ball is in the possession of an infielder. Possession is defined as having control of the ball by holding it up in the air, and the infielder MUST be located in the infield area.
    - Baserunners are not permitted to steal bases and shall remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit. PENALTY: If a runner is off the base and the ball is hit, the runner is out, and the ball is in play. If the ball is not hit, the runner must return to the base and the ball is dead.
    - Batters running to first base may turn left or right, provided that if they turn right (run through the base) they do not make an attempt to advance. The runner must immediately return to first after overrunning it.
    - Baserunners may "tag up" after a fly ball is caught.
- **Pinto Division-Specific Rules:**
    - Baserunners are NOT permitted to steal bases. The baserunner shall remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit or crosses home plate. PENALTY: If a runner is off the base and the ball is hit, the runner is out, and the ball is in play.
    - When the ball is in the possession of an infielder and, in the umpire's judgement, all play on the runner or runners has ceased, the umpire shall call "Time". The ball is dead and shall be returned to the coach-pitcher at the mound.
    - Baserunners may "tag up" after a fly ball is caught.
    - A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher if there are two outs in the inning; the courtesy runner must have made the previous out.

- **Kid-Pitch (Mustang & Bronco) Division-Specific Rules:**
  - A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher or pitcher of record at any time. A courtesy runner must be used for the catcher of record when there are two outs in the inning. A courtesy runner must have made the previous out.
  - Leadoffs are permitted on all bases.
  - **Modified Closed Bases (Mustang Division):** The Mustang Division will use modified closed bases. Under this rule:
    - A runner may lead off only to the end of the grass cutout surrounding the base (approximately 10 feet).
    - A runner may not attempt to steal until the ball has crossed home plate.
    - If the defense makes a pickoff attempt, the runner may advance at their own risk.
    - If an umpire determines that a runner left the base early, enforcement will be delayed until the conclusion of the play. The offense may not benefit from the violation.
    - Examples:
      - If the ball is put into play, or if the pitch results in a call that benefits the offense (such as a ball), the play will be declared dead immediately. The pitch will not count, and the runner must return to the original base.
      - If the result of the play benefits the defense, such as a pop-up that results in a double play or a pitch that is called a strike, the result of the play will stand.
  - **Optional Open Bases (Mustang Division):** During specific seasons, as determined by the Baseball Commissioner, the Mustang Division may adopt an open base policy on a season-by-season basis.
  - **Mustang Division:** Runners may steal any base except home. A stolen base occurs when a baserunner successfully advances to the next base while the pitcher is delivering the ball to home plate.
  - **Mustang Division:** Runners on third base cannot steal, but can attempt to score on:
    - A passed ball or a wild pitch
    - An overthrow by the catcher returning the ball to the pitcher.
    - A throw to a base by the catcher or pitcher
  - **Mustang Division:** An excessive leadoff at third base is a safety issue and may be ruled an attempt to steal home. PENALTY: For an attempted steal of home, the runner is out when touching home plate. *Note: This rule is intended to help protect baserunners at third base from getting hit by a line drive down the third base line, an excessive leadoff reduces a player's reaction time to a fast, hard-hit ball.*
  - **Bronco Division:** Runners may steal any base.

Pitching

- **Shetland Division:** Coach-pitch opportunities are governed by the Shetland Division-Specific Rules in the Batting section.
- **Pinto Division-Specific Rules:**
  - An adult coach or manager (18 years or older) is expected to pitch.
  - The coach pitcher must remain in contact with the pitching rubber while pitching. The ball must be thrown overhand. No kneeling or pitching from the knee is allowed.
  - A Coach Pitcher may elect to use the mechanical pitching machine provided by the league to deliver pitches to the batter.

- The coach pitcher must leave the field, proceeding to foul territory as soon as the ball is in play.
- The coach pitcher shall not direct or coach players in any way while on the mound. The coach pitcher is allowed to communicate with the base coaches if time is called. Umpires shall not permit more than one timeout per half inning. PENALTY: The coach will receive one warning if directing or coaching players and will be removed from the game if it continues. Umpires can provide some latitude with younger Pinto 6-7-year-old players early in the season, as the coach pitcher is in the best position to view the batter's alignment and recommend adjustments for safety reasons.

- **Kid-Pitch (Mustang & Bronco) Division-Specific Rules:**
  - **Mustang Division:** Pitching distance is 46 feet (front rubber). No exceptions.
  - **Bronco Division:** Pitching distance is 50 feet (front rubber). No exceptions.
  - Any pitcher withdrawn from the mound and/or lineup, or a pitcher who is withdrawn from the mound and stays in the game at another position, shall not be permitted to pitch again in the same game.
  - If a relief pitcher comes in ''cold'' because of an injury situation, the umpire shall allow the pitcher to warm up properly with at least ten pitches.
  - Pitchers in violation of any of the pitching rules shall be considered ineligible players for the remainder of the game.
  - The pitcher named in the batting order turned in prior to the start of the game shall pitch to the first batter or any substitute batter until such batter is put out or reaches first base, unless the pitcher sustains injury or illness which, in the judgment of the umpire, incapacitates them from pitching.
  - Balks will be called on a pitcher after that pitcher has received one warning. Each pitcher used in a game will be allowed one balk warning per game. Subsequent balks will be enforced.
  - **Mustang Division:** During the fall season, and during any other season as determined by the Baseball Commissioner, balks will be called on the pitcher; however, no penalty will be assessed. This will be treated as a "Teaching Balk."
  - **Mustang Division:** For balks during the spring season, a grace period will apply through a date designated by the Baseball Commissioner. During this period, the Teaching Balk policy will remain in effect, and no penalty will be assessed for a balk. After the designated date, standard balk enforcement will apply. Each pitcher will receive one warning, after which all balks will be enforced in accordance with league rules.
  - Balks shall be enforced using a delayed dead-ball mechanic consistent with MLB Official Baseball Rule (OBR) 6.02 when the ball is put into play. Penalty: The ball is dead, and each runner shall advance one base without liability to be put out, unless the batter reaches first base on a hit, error, base on balls, hit-by-pitch, or otherwise, and all runners advance at least one base, in which case the play shall stand and the balk shall be disregarded. If the ball is not put into play, the umpire may, at their discretion, declare a "no pitch" and call time to explain the balk infraction. Managers may participate in discussions regarding a balk ruling, and no charged mound visit shall be assessed if the discussion occurs immediately following the balk call.
  - Intentional walks are discouraged; the pitcher must pitch the ball.
  - Intentional walks will not be automatically issued at the request of the manager, pitcher, or catcher.
  - A pitcher must be replaced after reaching 40 pitches in a single inning. The pitcher may finish pitching to the batter before being removed.

- All players must follow the Pitch Smart chart below. *NOTE: The pitcher will only be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold he/she reached during the start of that at-bat, provided that the pitcher is removed before delivering a pitch to the next batter.*

LEAGUE AGE	DAILY MAX PITCHES	REQUIRED REST (PITCHES)					
		0 DAYS	1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS	4 DAYS	5 DAYS
7-8	50	1-20	21-35	36-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
9-10	75	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+	N/A
13-14	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+	N/A

Defense

- Every player shall play on defense in at least 2 complete innings by the end of the fourth inning (third inning for Shetland Divisions) and may not sit out more than 2 innings the entire game (unless a player is ill, injured, or refuses to play).
- **Shetland and Pinto Divisions:** Every player shall play on defense at least one inning at an infield position each game by the third inning. Managers should provide every player with an equal opportunity to play infield and outfield to progress their development.
- Failure to comply with defensive playing time rules will result in a one game suspension for the manager. A second offense will result in suspension for the remainder of the season or post-season play.
- **Shetland and Pinto Divisions:** Good baseball fundamentals should be taught and followed. This means fielders should learn to make throws to the proper base and should be discouraged from running down base runners to make an unassisted out.
- **Shetland and Pinto Divisions:** Ten players may be used defensively, with four players in the outfield. Free substitution is allowed.
- **Mustang & Bronco Divisions:** Only one timeout for defensive substitutions from the bench will be allowed during any half-inning (does not include pitching changes or injury situations).
- **Mustang & Bronco Divisions:** If a manager or coach goes onto the playing field to talk to any player or players more than once in a half inning, while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exceptions to this rule shall be in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire.
- On-field defensive switches or position changes are freely allowed, as long as it is not an attempt to delay the game.
- **Shetland & Pinto Divisions:** The infield fly rule is not in effect. Infielders must catch fly balls in order to record an out.
- **Shetland Division-Specific Rules:** (Revised for clarity)
    - Infield Positions
        - Infielders (1B, 2B, 3B, and SS) may position themselves on either side of the assumed base path but must remain within three (3) feet of it until the ball is hit.
            - The assumed base path is an imaginary line extending from first base to second base, and from second base to third base.
        - Infielders may not block, trip, or push a baserunner.
        - Infielders may not stand on a base unless they are in possession of the ball and actively attempting to record an out on a baserunner.

- Outfield Positions
  - Outfielders must begin each play behind the outfield arc, on the outfield grass, and remain there until the ball is put into play.
  - To establish a dead ball, an outfielder must throw or hand the ball to an infielder; the umpire determines when the ball is dead.
  - After a batted ball passes through the infield and beyond the assumed base path, or after a throw to a player covering a base is missed, an outfielder may tag the base assigned to that position or tag a runner advancing to or retreating from that base.
  - Outfielders are assigned the following bases:
    - **Right Fielder:** First Base
    - **Center Fielder(s):** Second Base
    - **Left Fielder:** Third Base
  - An outfielder may record an out only at the base assigned to that position but may assist with an out at any other base by throwing to the player covering it.
  - If an outfielder violates any positioning or assigned-base rule, the play is immediately dead.
  - For an outfield violation, each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the start of the play.
- Catcher Position
  - The catcher must stand behind the tee and offset toward first base for right-handed batters, or toward third base for left-handed batters.
  - Once the ball is in play, the catcher may field their position defensively but must not interfere with the batter-runner.
  - The catcher must always wear approved equipment, including at minimum a helmet with a face mask and a chest protector.
  - The catcher's arc extends 10 feet from the front of home plate between the first-base and third-base foul lines.
  - A batted ball that remains fair but does not pass beyond the catcher's arc is live and must be fielded by the catcher before any defensive play may be attempted.
  - After fielding the ball, the catcher may throw to a player covering a base, tag a runner, or touch home plate for a force out.
  - If a defensive player other than the catcher fields a ball inside the catcher's arc, the play is dead, the batter is awarded first base and each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the start of the play.
  - A runner on third who is not forced may advance at their own risk and may be put out by a tag by any player (except pitcher) or a throw to another defensive player.
  - When a force play exists at home and the ball is fielded beyond the catcher's arc, the defense must throw the ball to the catcher covering home plate to record the out.
- Pitcher Position
  - The player at the pitcher position must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball is put into play and may record an out only by throwing the ball to a player covering a base.
- If the pitcher fields a ball hit inside the catcher's arc, the play is dead, the batter is awarded first base and each runner is awarded one base from the base occupied at the start of the play.

- A force-out throw must be overhand. A defensive player may leave their assigned position to make a force out only at that position's assigned base; the shortstop's assigned base is second base.
- With five defensive players, the coach must assign all players to any infield positions. If the catcher position is unfilled, the team forfeits any play requiring catcher involvement.
- With six defensive players, first base, second base, third base, shortstop, pitcher, and catcher must be occupied.

- **Pinto Division-Specific Rules**
  - Defensive alignment is the manager's discretion when only 7 or 8 players are present.
  - When 9 or more players are present, the pitcher and catcher positions must be occupied.
  - The player fielding at the pitcher's position shall take position to the rear of the pitching rubber, on either side of the coach-pitcher, with both feet inside the dirt area and within 6 feet of the coach-pitcher until the ball is in play. The pitcher may make an unassisted out at any base.
  - The catcher shall be located in the catcher's box, directly behind home plate in full catcher's equipment including cup for protection. If cup is not used, catcher must be back closer to the backstop.
  - Outfield players must remain behind the outfield arc (on the edge of the outfield grass and dirt of the infield) until the ball is put into play. Outfielders are expected to field their position and begin each swing on the outfield grass. However, if the ball is batted through the infield and beyond the baseline, or is thrown to a player covering a base and is missed, outfielders may record an out by tagging the following assigned bases or tagging a runner advancing to/or retreating back towards the base they came from.
    - Right Fielder- 1st Base
    - Center Fielders- 2nd Base
    - Left Fielders- 3rd Base
  - Outfielders may also assist with an out by throwing to a player covering any other base. If an outfielder violates the backup rule, the play is ruled dead and the runners advance to next base from where runner began the play.

Post-Season Tournament Rules

Post Season Tournament play, if applicable, will be determined by the league. Tournament rules will not vary from Regular season rules except for the following:

- Seeding will be determined in order by: 1) won-loss record; 2) head-to-head; 3) total runs allowed; 4) total runs scored; and 5) coin flip.
- The home team is the highest seed (lowest seed number), except home team for the championship game is the team from the winner's bracket, regardless of original seeding.
- Playoff games can NOT end with a tie. All playoff games ending in a tie at the end of regulation time will use the International Tie-Break Rules to determine the winner.
- There are no time limits on Championship games (all divisions) and will be played until the completion of six innings.
- All Championship games ending in a tie at the end of six innings will then go to the International Tie-Break Rules to determine the winner.
- Pick-up players WILL NOT be permitted during post-season play.
- **Bronco Division:** The five runs per inning scoring rule does NOT apply during post-season play.

Governing Rules

Rules not covered by this document shall revert first to the current year's *Rules and Regulations for PONY Baseball, Inc.,* then to the previous year's *Official Rules of Major League Baseball.* If a situation or incident during game play is not covered by any of those rules, the head umpire on the field will make the final determination.