



2021 PONY League Baseball Local Rules

Participating Youth Sports Organizations:

Marysville Junior Baseball & Softball Association

Dublin Youth Athletics

Hilliard Baseball Association

18U Pony League Baseball Rules

Marysville Junior Baseball & Softball Association (MJBSA)

Dublin Youth Athletics (DYA)

Hilliard Baseball Association (HBA)

(Rev. May 2021)

Introduction

The rules contained below are a collaboration between directors from MJBSA, DYA, and HBA for the 2021 18U Baseball season. Our collective goal is to provide the youth of our communities an enjoyable opportunity to develop their athletic skills to their fullest potential through participation in the sport of baseball while encouraging the spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship, and athletic competition. The safety and welfare of our youth, the umpire staff and our coaches is our highest ideal. Knowledge, understanding, compliance and adherence to these rules by all participants is paramount.

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1. Rules Basis

- a. The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Baseball Rules, in concert with the National Federation of State High Schools Association (NFHS) are the foundation for the rules of the 2021 18U PONY League division. All rules not addressed explicitly herein are implied to conform to the current official Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) High School Baseball Rule Book, however, rules contained within this document supersede these OHSAA rules as defined as "League Specific Clarifications."

1.2. Age Qualifications

- a. MJBSA - The 18U Pony League is open to boys or girls who are between the ages of 14-18 as of January 1st, of the current registration year.
- b. HBA - Pony League is open to boys and girls ages 13-16 regardless of school grade. Age for league play is determined on July 31st 2020.
- c. DYA - These leagues are for youths interested in playing recreational baseball. The different ages comprising this league are as follows:
 - Pony - This league is typically for boys and girls in the 8th - 9th grades.
 - Senior Pony - This league is typically for boys and girls in the 10th - 12th grades.

1.3. League Play

- a. The combined Pony leagues from the MJBSA, DYA, and HBA organizations are competitive leagues.
- b. League play will begin in early June and commence in mid July with a postseason tournament.
- c. Games will be typically scheduled Monday through Saturday in single or double header formats dependent on game location and field availability.
- d. Rainouts, make-up, and tournament games may be scheduled on Sundays, if necessary.
- e. Paid umpire(s) are provided and are paid by the HOME team during the regular season.

1.4. Field Locations

- a. Marysville HOME games will take place at the Union County Sports Complex of the Union County Joint Recreation District (UCJRD) located at 16000 County Home Road, Marysville, Ohio 43040. Fields #5 - #8 will be used.

- b. Dublin HOME games will take place at Avery Park, Field #8 which will be located at 7401 Avery Road, Dublin, Ohio 43016.
- c. Hilliard HOME games will take place at Hilliard Darby High School Auxiliary Field (formally Memorial Field) located at 4200 Leppert Road, Hilliard, Ohio 43026. Field is located on the west side of the high school.

1.5. Uniforms

- a. Hats and jerseys are included in the registration fees. Players will provide baseball pants.
- b. Players are to wear their issued team's uniform (hat, shirt, baseball pants) when on the field of play during any game. Uniforms are to be worn appropriately.
- c. Pitchers are not to wear WHITE or GRAY sleeves under their jersey.
- d. Jewelry is prohibited..

1.6. Field Dimensions

- a. Pitching rubber: 60 feet, 6 inches from the back of home plate.
- b. Basepath: 90 feet
- c. Distance from home to 2nd base: 128 feet

2. GAME PROCEDURES

2.1. Code of Conduct for Coaches, Players, and Fans

- a. Players are to remain on the bench unless involved in play. In play is defined warming-up, on deck, base coaching, or other legitimate direction from the coaches.
- b. Players, Coaches, Managers and Scorekeepers are the only persons allowed to be on the team bench after the umpire starts the game.
- c. Coaches, other than base coaches and scorekeepers on the team bench are required to remain in the dugouts behind the fenced areas. Coaches are not to position themselves in the field of play in front of the dugout fence. An example of this would be coaches sitting outside the dugout on a bucket.
- d. Fans are required to remain well back of the playing field. Players and fans situated directly behind the backstop must move if requested to do so by the umpire.
- e. Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches are expected to exercise influence over the fans. Games can and will be terminated for fan unruliness; however this is an extreme measure and is to be avoided except under the most extreme circumstances.
- f. Game termination is at the sole discretion of the umpire.
- g. Players, coaches, or spectators may NOT harass the batter, base runners, pitcher, or fielders.
- h. Players, coaches and spectators may encourage pitchers or batters, but not to the point of influencing calls made by the umpire or swings taken by the batter (e.g. shouting "good pitch" before the ball has crossed the plate and the call has been made by the umpire is not permitted.)
- i. Any coach or player identified as throwing or abusing any equipment, be it accidental or intentional, may be issued a team warning at the discretion of the umpire.
- j. Penalties will be assessed to each team independent of violations of the opposing team. Exceptions to this include:
 - A player who intentionally throws a bat. The player may be ejected from the game at the discretion of the Umpire.

- k. A player can be called out and/or ejected from the game if the player's actions are to intentionally harm another player, coach or fan.

2.2. Game Duration

- a. All regular season games are scheduled to play (7) innings at the 18U Pony League baseball division.
- b. There WILL be time limits on games. No new inning shall be started after (2) hours from the SCHEDULED start time. The time clock starts at the scheduled starting time, regardless of when the game actually begins. Games may be delayed up to (15) minutes, but the end time remains the same, (2) hours from scheduled start time.
- c. The start of an inning is when the last out was recorded in the bottom of the previous inning. For example, if the last out of the inning was made at (1) hours and (59) minutes after the scheduled start time, the next inning is to be played even though the batter will not come to the plate until after the (2) hour time limit.
- d. The Umpire is the official timekeeper and will communicate start time to the HOME team's book, where it will be recorded.
- e. Tournament Time Limit. League directors will determine as to whether or not a modified time limit will be utilized during the post-season tournament, such as a drop dead time (game ends, regardless of situation) after (2) hours and (30) minutes, with the score based on the last fully completed inning, or another type of format. Format decision will be clearly communicated to coaches, players and umpires prior to post-season games.

2.3. Pre-Game Warm-ups

- a. There will be no batting practice on the field of play (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the game. Furthermore, there will be no "soft-toss" or "pepper" permitted at any time. Soft-toss is hitting the ball into any fence or net as a batting practice alternative. Pepper is hitting the ball back to the pitcher(s), usually outside the field of play. Both are dangerous to players and fans, and potentially destructive to our baseball facilities.
- b. Each team will have (7) minutes of infield warm-ups prior to the scheduled start of each game. The HOME team shall have infield warm-ups first. All infield warm-ups will be completed (1) minute prior to the scheduled game starting time.
- c. Infield warm-ups may be shortened or eliminated to maintain game starting times. This is particularly important on Saturdays and evenings when more than one game is scheduled on the field. Game start times are to be kept on time.

2.4. In-Game Warm-ups (between innings)

- a. Coaches should ensure that players are ready to bat and take the field.
- b. Games are to be kept moving. (3) minutes between inning halves is an acceptable time for between inning warm-ups and fielding.
- c. Any player who warms up the pitcher must wear a catcher's mask. Coaches warming up pitchers are not required to wear a catcher's mask.
- d. Infield/outfield warm ups are permitted between innings as long as it does not delay and must take place when the pitcher is taking warm-up pitches. Umpires can take away this privilege if it is abused and causes delays.

2.5. Run Rule and Mercy Rule

- a. A maximum of (7) runs can be scored per inning.

- b. Mercy Rule. A game ends and becomes official anytime AFTER (5) innings when a team is (10) or more runs behind and has completed its term at bat (4 ½ if the HOME team is winning).

2.6. Speed Up Play Rule

- a. The offensive team may use a "courtesy runner" for the pitcher or catcher with (2) outs.
- b. This is a "speed up" rule intended to maintain the game's pace. If the replacement runner is not ready in a "reasonable" amount of time (in the Umpire's discretion) the umpire may continue play.
- c. The courtesy runner can only be used when there are two outs.
- d. The pitcher/catcher position is determined by their playing position in the next inning.
- e. Courtesy runner shall be defined as the last batter or base runner to make an out.
- f. Head Coach shall initiate the use of a courtesy runner by requesting time from the Umpire, declaring the permission to use a courtesy runner and receiving acknowledgement from the Umpire.
- g. If the catcher, for whom the replacement runner was substituted for, is not ready to warm up the pitcher when the catcher's team returns to defense in a reasonable amount of time, the Umpire may wave off warm up pitches or deny future courtesy runners.

2.7. Complete Games

- a. Games will be considered complete when (7) innings have been played (6 ½ innings if HOME team is winning; Time Limit (Rule 2.1.c) has been reached or Mercy Rule (Rule 2.2.b) is in effect.

2.8. Player Participation

- a. All players shall be treated fairly with respect to other players.
- b. Coaches' failure to comply with the Participation Rules will be subject to review by the respective league's program director and may subject the team to forfeiture of a win or subject the coach to disciplinary action.
- c. If a player is placed on disciplinary restriction by the coach, notice must be given to the umpire staff and the opposing coach prior to the start of the game.
- d. Coaches do not have to play late arriving player(s), if the player(s) arrive after the 3rd inning has been completed.

2.9. Batting Order

- a. The batting lineup will consist of all players present at the start of the game. All batters must follow the batting order as established by the coach at the beginning of the game. Any player arriving after the start of the game will be placed at the end of the batting order. If there are only (8) players the 9th position will NOT be an out. (Refer to rule 2.11.b)
- b. All players listed in the batting order must bat before the leadoff batter takes his next turn at bat.
- c. Players arriving after the start of the game, but prior to the completion of the third inning, will be added to the end of the batting order. No other changes to the batting order are permitted once the game begins.
- d. There will be no designated hitter.

2.10. Defensive Innings Played

- a. Each player in attendance of any game must play a minimum of (3) innings of defense with (2) of those innings being played within the first (4) innings and bat at least once.
- b. The (3) inning participation rule can and should be waived in the event that the player is injured.
- c. Players who are not under restriction, but unable to play minimum required innings due to a shortened game, will start the next game.

2.11. Insufficient Number of Players and Call Ups

- a. A team may start and play with a minimum of (8) players in the 18U PonyLeague, without penalty.
- b. No outs will be given for absent batters.
- c. If a team has an insufficient number of players at game start time or after the game starts, no more than (15) minutes will be given to find eligible pick-up player(s). Official time will be reported to Umpire and HOME book. At the end of (15) minutes, the team short of players will automatically forfeit.
- d. If both teams lack enough players, the game will be rescheduled to a later date.
- e. If a base runner is injured on the field and cannot continue and player number drops below (9), the player who made the last offensive out will pinch run for the injured runner.
- f. Teams are allowed to finish a game with (7) players in the event of an injury AND there are no eligible pick-up players to be found. No outs will be issued if the injured player is due to bat.
- g. Pick-up players are permitted to be used throughout the regular season and tournaments as long as the following stipulations are met:
 - The opposing coach and the umpire are notified prior to the start of the game.
 - Pick-up players must be from the league lower (ie: MJBSA 18U PONY league must pick up players from the MJBSA 13U American League)
 - Pick-up players must be current members of the MJBSA, DYA, or HBA, in good standing.
 - No more than (3) pick-up players can play per team, not to exceed a starting line-up. For example, the 18U Pony League can pick up (3) players to a maximum of (9) players. (Refer to rule 2.11.b)
- h. Late arriving team player(s) that have been substituted by a pick-up player(s), must replace the pick-up player(s) upon arrival, unless the late arriving player(s) have already been suspended due to disciplinary action.
 - All disciplinary actions must follow the guidelines of each respective organization. (Refer to rule 1.1.a)

2.12. Rainouts, Makeups and Ties

- a. During the regular season, all games are considered POSTPONED, COMPLETED (won/lost), TIED, or SUSPENDED.
- b. If the Umpire deems the field conditions as unplayable, the umpire may rule to POSTPONE as a game that has not started or SUSPEND a game in progress.
- c. At the Umpire's discretion, it may be necessary to call a game for safety reasons due to impending severe weather or darkness. For this purpose, (4) innings constitute an official game.

- d. If the game was official in length at the time play was suspended, AND the bottom half of the inning has been reached, AND the HOME team is in the lead, the current score is the official ending score and the game will not be rescheduled for completion. For this purpose, 3 ½ innings are sufficient for an official game.
- e. If the game has not gone long enough to be called official, (4) innings in length, the game will be rescheduled to play to completion at the next convenient opportunity.
- f. Games suspended prior to the completion of a full inning, will revert to the score of the last full inning of play, unless the previous inning resulted in a tie, the game will be rescheduled to resume play to completion or to time limit, at the next convenient opportunity.
- g. During regular season games, if the game is tied at the completion of (7) innings, AND time limit has not been reached, a maximum of (2) additional innings will be played to determine a winner. If after (2) innings the game is still tied, the game will be officially scored as a tie. If during the extra-inning play the time limit is achieved AND the HOME team has not batted, the score will revert to the last full inning of play.
- h. Extra innings will be used to break ties during tournament play.

2.13. Umpire Calls and Conferences

- a. NO HEAD COACH OR ASSISTANT COACH CAN QUESTION AN UMPIRE'S JUDGEMENT CALL.
- b. Only Head Coaches may request a conference to question umpires and only regarding the RULES.
- c. Both teams' Head Coaches and the umpire(s) must be involved in the conference.
 - Assistant Coaches, base coaches, players or spectators are strictly prohibited from participation in this conference.
 - Time limit for such a conference is (3) minutes.
 - The umpire's decision is final.
- d. No player or spectator is allowed to question or argue with an umpire's call, regardless if it is a judgement call or an interpretation of the rules.

2.14. Official Scorer

- a. The HOME team will provide the official scorer for each game and each team's scorekeeper shall verify scores between innings. Both Head Coaches must agree on the final score before leaving the field.

2.15. Score Reporting

- a. After each game, both coaches are responsible for the final score and pitchers used for each game (last name of player / jersey # / innings pitched) for reporting to the League Director(s).

3. EQUIPMENT

3.1. Batting Helmets

- a. All batters must wear NOCSAE (National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment) approved batting helmets. Participants may wear NOCSAE batting helmets with attached NOCSAE approved face guards or jaw guards. Batters must wear batting helmets at all times when on the field of play (on-deck circle, batter's

box, base paths, or any location where batting is taking place) during MJBSA, DYA, or HBA sanctioned games. Batting helmets shall cover both ears and temples.

3.2. Bats

- a. All bats used in this age division must adhere to OHSAA Bat Regulations. Bats shall be made of wood, aluminum, or any other materials manufactured and approved for baseball game play.

3.3. Footwear

- a. Rubber or steel baseball cleats are permitted.
- b. In the event game play or practice occurs on a synthetic surface (artificial turf), only plastic molded cleats or cleats specifically designed for synthetic turf fields will be permitted. Steel cleats are PROHIBITED on synthetic surface fields!

3.4. Baseballs

- a. The HOME team will be responsible for providing (2) new game balls, made of leather, at the start of each game.
- b. Game balls shall be made of leather, NOCSAE/NFHS certified and approved game play.

3.5. Catchers

- a. Catchers are REQUIRED to wear the following
 - NOCSAE protective headgear and face protection with throat guard
 - Chest protector
 - Shin guards
 - Gender appropriate athletic supporter and protection
 - A mitt designed specifically for the catching position

3.6. Other protective equipment

- a. It is strongly recommended that all players wear gender appropriate protective equipment.
- b. Coaches and umpires staff must be notified of any pertinent medical protective items prior to the start of the game.

4. LEAGUE SPECIFIC RULES

4.1. Pitching

- a. The pitching week begins on Monday and runs through Sunday.
- b. Coaches and pitchers shall follow pitching regulations as outlined by our Hybrid Pitching Model. This model will utilize pitching regulations outlined by OHSAA Pitching Regulations (see table below) which incorporates pitch count and REQUIRED days of rest.
- c. (5) innings is the maximum any pitcher can pitch in any game. Any pitcher who pitches (5) innings or less, must follow the pitching regulations for pitch counts and days of rest.
- d. Pitchers may not re-enter the game as a pitcher once removed from the pitching position.
- e. A single pitch constitutes any inning pitched.
- f. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of (125) pitches per game.. This will require the pitcher to rest (3) days prior to becoming eligible to pitch again.

- g. Pitch count rules will be self-enforced. Both teams will compare numbers between innings with the scorekeepers. Each team is to ask the other for ineligible pitchers and pitch counts prior to their game.
- h. The post season tournament will be treated as a week unto itself. The inning count for pitchers does NOT reset to zero for tournaments that continue into the following week.
- i. Balks will be enforced. Each team will have (1) balk warning. After the warning*, all balk rules will be enforced.
 - (*) EXCEPTION - If a pitcher makes a play by an illegal move on a runner (balk) that results in an out, all runners will be given the proper award, regardless of the warning declaration. The out will not be recorded.
- j. Coaches must remove the pitcher upon their 2nd trip to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher OR upon their 3rd trip to the mound in the same game to the same pitcher.
- k. The batter must make a reasonable effort, at the umpire's discretion, to avoid being hit by errant pitches. Failure to do so by the batter in an attempt to "take one for the team" will result in a dead ball, no pitch.
- l. The elevated pitching mound is optional in the 18U Pony League

Ohio High School Athletic Association
 4080 Roselea Place
 Columbus, OH 43214



1.7 of the Baseball Regulations will now read: *Pitching restrictions in grades 7-12 shall adhere to the following pitch/rest limitations:*

Level	Daily Pitch Limit	0 Days of Rest	1 Day of Rest	2 Days of Rest	3 Days of Rest
Grades 7-12	125 pitches	1 – 30 pitches	31 – 50 pitches	51 – 75 pitches	76 + pitches

- 1.71) A pitcher may finish the current batter if **THE DAILY PITCH LIMIT (125)** is reached during that at bat.
- 1.72) At the end of each contest, coaches will submit pitcher number and pitches thrown in the designated data collection system.
- 1.73) All pitches thrown in a suspended game or a "no contest" game SHALL COUNT toward the daily pitch limit and the total number of pitches thrown.
- 1.74) All pitches thrown in a scrimmage or Preview SHALL COUNT toward the daily pitch limit and the total number of pitches thrown.
- 1.75) Each school/team must keep a record of all pitches thrown by each of their players in each game and make this available to the OHSAA upon request.
- 1.76) Any player pitching during a period in which rest is required is considered to be pitching as an ineligible player.
Note: Any victorious contest in which an ineligible player is participating will result in forfeiture of the contest.

4.2. Offense

- a. Bunting is permitted, however "Slug Bunting" (squaring to bunt, then pulling back to a full swing position, and hitting) is prohibited. This is a safety concern. The batter will be declared out and a dead ball will result with all players returning to the base(s) they started from in the event a slug bunt is executed.
- b. The 3rd Strike Rule is in effect. When a catcher fails to catch the 3rd strike before the ball touches the ground, the batter can become a runner on a dropped 3rd strike except when first base is occupied with fewer than two outs.

- c. For rules regarding INTERFERENCE, see rule 4.4.c

4.3. Defense

- a. There will be (9) defensive players allowed on the field. (6) positioned in the infield and (3) in the outfield.
- b. Open substitutions are permitted.
- c. All players must wear a baseball glove. A first baseman may use a glove designed specifically for that position. The catcher's position glove (mitt) will be used at the catcher position only.
- d. The Infield Fly rule will be enforced. The Infield Fly rule applies when there are fewer than TWO outs, and there is a force play at 3RD (runners at 1ST & 2ND or bases loaded). A fair fly ball which is hit (not including a line drive or bunt) and can be caught with ordinary effort (as deemed by Umpire judgement), the Umpire will signal "Infield Fly!" The play is still live, the batter will be called out, even if the ball is not caught or dropped. Base runners may advance at their own jeopardy after tagging or stay without penalty.
- e. For rules regarding OBSTRUCTION, see rule 4.4.d

4.4. Base Running, Stealing & Sliding

- a. Runners are allowed to lead off and steal. If a catcher makes an attempt to throw out a runner attempting to steal, the ball will remain live and the runner may advance at his/her own risk.
- b. If a pitcher throws to any base, in an attempt to hold a runner, and the ball hits the fielder, the ball is live.
- c. Base runners must avoid interference with a fielder in the process of fielding a ball or making a play at a base. OFFENSIVE INTERFERENCE is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play.
- d. Fielders may not obstruct a base runner in the process of running the bases. If the fielder is not in the process of fielding the ball or making an out attempt directly at a base. OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. The runner will be awarded the base they were advancing to in the event of obstruction.
- e. Base runners are to avoid flagrant contact and when approaching 2nd, 3rd, or home plate, are required to slide when a play is imminent. The runner will be declared out if there is a collision between the runner and the fielder attempting to catch the ball, making a tag or force out if no attempt to slide is made.
- f. Play at home plate. Any runner attempting to score must slide if the catcher is in a defensive position and receiving the ball. If the catcher is not in position to make the out or the ball is not being thrown to the catcher, the runner is not required to slide. If the catcher is in the defensive position and receiving the ball in an attempt to make the out, and the player does not slide, it is an automatic out for the offensive team. This rule is in place to avoid malicious contact. Please instruct your players to slide at 2nd, 3rd and home plate when a play is being made.

5. **GROUND RULES**

- 5.1. Ground rules will be discussed before each game. Umpires have the responsibility for making any changes to the ground rules to protect the player or batter in the game.
- 5.2. Home team will sit on the first base side.
- 5.3. Base coaches' boxes are in play. Base coaches must stay in the vicinity of the base they are coaching. Base coaches are not permitted to influence play by touching a base runner (i.e. pushing a runner off the base, grabbing a runner to prevent overrunning a base, ect.)
- 5.4. A fair ball which rolls under or bounces over the outfield fence will be a ground rule double.
 - a. Fielders should raise both hands in the air to indicate the ball is out of play.
- 5.5. A ball that lands in fair territory beyond (1st) or (3rd) base and is subsequently bounds out of play shall be a ground rule double. Any ball dropping in front of an outfielder and bounding out of play shall be ruled a ground rule double.
 - a. Fielders should raise both hands in the air to indicate the ball is out of play.