

BRONCO DIVISION – NATIONAL LEAGUE RULES

GOVERNING RULES AND PHILOSOPHY

It is the belief of Irvine PONY baseball to offer all youth who desire to play organized baseball the opportunity to fulfill this aspiration. The Irvine PONY association believes that participating in an organized youth baseball program will implant positive attributes of sportsmanship, teamwork, self-reliance, discipline and, most of all, self-esteem. Most importantly it is believed that this participation should be a family affair. Parents may hold volunteer positions in one of the hundreds of capacities available or just to support their children at the field level.

PONY ("Protect Our Nation's Youth") baseball is regulated by the official baseball rules as stated in the current edition of The Sporting News. These rules are amended firstly by PONY Baseball rules as listed in their current official handbook. Due to local circumstances, the division commissioner and the Irvine PONY board may amend these rules at the local level as approved.

1.0 ROLE OF MANAGERS, COACHES AND PARENTS

- 1.1 Managers and Coaches should realize that they are role models for the players.
- 1.2 The team manager is responsible for communicating the standards of sportsmanlike conduct to the coaches and parents of his/her team and must attempt to curtail inappropriate behavior by the players, coaches and parents of his/her team. Foul language, hazing of opponents or umpires, fighting, reckless use of equipment and other unsportsmanlike actions shall not be tolerated. Problems should be reported to the division commissioner so the League can take appropriate action, per Section 20 of the PONY Regulations.
- 1.3 The umpire is the final decision-maker in all cases regarding baseball rules and on-field conduct by players and coaches. Any discussion with the umpire will be with the umpire's permission.
- 1.4 Players are generally expected to attend practices and games. Players/Parents are expected to notify managers/coaches ahead of time if players can not attend practices, games or other team activities. Many managers have team guidelines regarding practices and arrival time prior to games. Players are expected to comply with team guidelines. Managers have the right to discipline players in repeated violation of team guidelines, subject to approval of the division commissioner or VP. The opposing coach is to be notified if playing time is affected.

2.0 OFFICIAL START TIME

- 2.1 A game shall start no later than 15 minutes from the scheduled time due to not having enough players to take the field defensively. A team must have a minimum of 8 players to constitute a complete team. If 8 players are not present when it is time to take the field defensively, the team with the shortage of players will forfeit the game. If 8 players are available the game may be played; however, one out will be recorded every time the missing 9th player was to bat.
- 2.2 A game shall start no later than 20 minutes due to not having an umpire. If an umpire does not take his position within 20 minutes of the official start time, both managers must agree to play the game without an umpire. An unbiased person may

be utilized as an umpire if both managers agree. If a volunteer is selected and the managers agree, this person will take their position behind the pitchers. The calls and decisions made by this person are to be accepted as valid. No disagreements or changes will be allowed once the decision has been made to use this person as an umpire, and all decisions made by the stand-in umpire are final. However, if one manager does not want to utilize a person from the stands then the game needs to be re-scheduled by notifying a commissioner.

3.0 LENGTH AND COMPLETION OF GAMES

- 3.1 A Bronco game is 7 innings but may be subject to a time limit. No new inning may start after two hours. Drop dead at two hours 15 minutes. If, at the end of 2 hours and 15 minutes the inning is not completed, the score will revert to the prior inning. However, the umpire shall complete the inning if it appears the game may finish without affecting other non-PONY scheduled games (e.g. Adult Softball at 7:30pm). It is important that the official timekeeper note the time the game begins. Extra innings are allowed, subject to time limitations.
- 3.2 A complete game will be considered five full innings, per Pony rule 11. It will be up to the league to reschedule and finish any incomplete game. Time limitations do not apply until a game is considered a complete game.
- 3.3 There are tie games during the regular season. Play-off games will be played until there is a winner, even if it is necessary to suspend play and resume the game at a later date, per PONY Rule 11.F.
- 3.4 If logistical limitations prevent scheduling of resumption of play during the sixth or seventh inning, the outcome of the game will be determined by agreement of the two managers and the division commissioner. The only two options to be considered would be reversion to the score at the end of last completed inning (fifth or sixth inning) or a declaration of a tie game.
- 3.5 "Mercy" rule: All games, with the exception of the championship game, will observe the following run rule: Play will end if the home team has a 10-run lead after four and one half innings or if the visiting team has a 10-run lead after five innings. Managers and players shall not declare that a game is over due to the "Mercy" rule. It is up to the discretion of the umpire to invoke the mercy rule.

4.0 GAME ROSTER

- 4.1 All drafted players must be listed on the game roster. If a player is absent or injured and not available to play, the roster must reflect this status.
- 4.2 All rosters must be given to the opposing manager and the home team scorekeeper prior to game time with the correct game line-up. Once the game has started no changes may be made to the line-up, except for late arrivals. Late arrivals must be placed at the bottom of the active batting order.
- 4.3 The official scorekeeper shall be the home team scorekeeper unless agreed upon differently by both managers. The official scorekeeper surrenders loyalty to either team and cannot offer or intentionally withhold information in order to create an advantage for either team.

- 4.4 A player who leaves before the end of a game (non-injury situation): An out will be recorded at that position in the batting order for the balance of the game, unless the manager has done the following:

Notified the opposing manager, umpire and the official scorekeeper at the beginning of the game.

AND

The player has been put at the bottom of the batting order.

- 4.5 A player who leaves before the end of a game due to injury: His position in the batting order shall be counted as an out the first time he is unable to bat. Subsequent absences during scheduled batting appearance shall not be counted as outs.
- 4.6 If a manager is short of players for a game he can enlist players from the American league. The player must bat last and cannot pitch.

5 BATTING

- 5.1 It is mandatory that all players in attendance at the start of the game shall be listed in the batting line-up and must be given the opportunity to bat, whether they are holding a field position or not in the inning in which they are scheduled to bat.
- 5.2 Batting out of order: An out may be recorded against the batter that missed his turn after an appeal is made to the umpire before the next pitch or play.
- 5.3 Players who intentionally, in the judgment of the Umpire, throw bats or protective headgear, or discard protective headgear while batting or running the bases, may be ejected from the game following completion of any play in progress at the time the violation occurs. Such action does not constitute an out and such players shall be replaced as batters or base runners as required.

6 PITCHING

- 6.1 Pitchers shall not pitch more than 7 innings in a game. Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of 10 innings per week (Monday-Sunday).
- 6.2 Pitchers shall throw a maximum of 65 pitches in a game (irrespective of the number of innings allowed). If a pitcher reaches 65 pitches before completing the current at bat then he shall be permitted to complete that at bat but shall immediately be removed after that batter has completed his at bat.

At the end of every inning the two team's scorekeepers will record the official pitch count for each pitcher each inning. When a pitching change occurs a total will be recorded for posting on the PONY website score reporting system. When reporting pitchers the total pitches will be recorded next to the pitcher's name separated by a comma. Failure to report accurate pitch totals can lead to manager suspension.

If there are any unresolved challenges relating to pitch count the count according to the home team scorebook will be considered the correct count.

- 6.3 Rest period: a pitcher that pitches 51 or more pitches in a game faces a mandatory 1 game rest period and is not eligible to pitch in the team's next scheduled game. Rest periods are absolute and do not reset on a weekly basis (i.e. a pitcher pitching 51 or more pitches on a Saturday **cannot** pitch in his team's next scheduled game even though it is in a new week). Rest periods are mandatory based on pitch count and are not related to innings pitched.
- 6.4 Once a pitcher has been removed from the mound, he may not pitch again for the remainder of the game.
- 6.5 As soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter the pitcher shall be considered as having pitched in one inning.
- 6.6 When a relief pitcher comes into the game he will be allowed eight warm up pitches. Existing pitchers are allowed five warm up pitches between innings. A relief pitcher that enters the game because of an existing pitcher's injury will be allowed as many warm up pitches as needed.
- 6.7 The pitcher named in the batting order, turned in prior to the start of the game, shall pitch to the first batter until such batter is put out or reaches a base safely. The pitcher can be removed while the first batter is up only if the he sustains an injury or illness, which in the judgment of the umpire, incapacitates him from pitching.
- 6.8 Balks are to be called by the Umpire as in "Official Baseball Rules."
- 6.9 Intentional Walks- If a manager elects to walk a batter intentionally no pitches need to be thrown. Manager shall inform the umpire of his intention and the batter shall take first base

7 FIELDING

- 7.1 There are free substitutions at the half inning. However, once the inning has started, defensive realignments may only occur with the introduction of a new pitcher or an injury.
- 7.2 NO PLAYER MAY SIT OUT TWO CONSECUTIVE INNINGS. The exception would be due to an injury or change of a pitcher.
- 7.3 If 10 players are present, no player may be required to sit out more than one inning in a 7 inning game. If 11 or more players are present, each player must sit out one inning and no player may be required to sit out more than two innings in a 7 inning game.
- 7.4 All players must play an infield by the fourth inning. Both the pitcher and catcher will be considered infield positions. The exception will be if a novice player would pose a safety risk to himself or to other players by playing in the infield. In the case of such an exception, the manager must inform the opposing manager and official scorekeeper of this player's situation prior to the start of the game.

8 BASERUNNING

- 8.1 PONY Rule 9.K.(1) shall apply: Full stealing under normal baseball rules.
- 8.2 Players **MUST** slide or **AVOID** contact to injure or disrupt a defensive player. If the umpire determines that a player intended to harm the defensive player, that player will be recorded as an out and ejected from the game.
- 8.3 The catcher or other defensive player may not block any base or home plate without possession of the ball or be in the act of fielding the ball. The fielder will be guilty of obstruction as in "Official Baseball Rules."
- 8.4 With 2 outs and if the runner on base is the catcher for the following inning, the runner may be replaced with the player that made the previous out. This is intended to allow the game to be speed up.
- 8.5 If a runner is injured and is unable to run or a batter is hit by a pitch and is unable to run, the runner may be replaced by a replacement runner without recording an out. The replacement runner may be chosen by the defensive team.

9 OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE TIME-OUTS

- 9.1 Umpires shall not permit more than one offensive time out in each half inning to allow a Manager or Coach to talk with a player.
- 9.2 One defensive time-out per inning is permitted. On the second trip the pitcher must be removed from the mound. A defensive time-out is considered to be taken when a coach/manager step past the 1st and 3rd baseline and on to the field for any reason what so ever except injury or to fix a uniform. If there is any delay to the game because of a manager communicating to his pitcher directly, that too will be considered a time-out.

10.0 FARM TEAM

To avoid going to 8 players a farm system has been established. In order for this rule to take effect and be utilized without abuse the following rules will apply:

- 10.1 Only sanctioned and appointed teams by the commissioner may be utilized for farm team activity. Hierarchy for farm team status is shown below.

TEAM	FARMS FROM
BRONCO NL	BRONCO AL
BRONCO AL	MUSTANG NL

- 10.2 A manager may not go to a farm team unless the following criteria is in place:
 - 10.2.1 the manager has reason to believe his team will fall to 9 players or less at or during a scheduled game.
 - 10.2.2 A Commissioner has been notified prior to game time for approval. If the commissioner is unavailable, the V.P. of the league must be notified. The commissioner has the final approval on the use of a farm team.

- 10.2.3 The opposing manager is notified prior to game start time that you are using a farm team player and the names of your absent players. If rules for farm team usage are not adhered to, the manager must be notified by the opposing manager and corrective actions taken. If the situation is not corrected, the game will be forfeited by the team utilizing the farm advantage.
- 10.3 As many farm players as necessary to complete a 9 person roster may be acquired through the approved channels.
- 10.4 The Commissioner is the only person other than the rules committee that may assign farm team status. This must be completed prior to the first scheduled league game.
- 10.5 It is to the advantage of all concerned to attempt to supply the most talented child available when you are asked to supply a farm team player. You must discuss this with your team parents and let them know this policy is being adopted. Most kids and parents really like the opportunity to play with another team as a farm player.
- 10.6 The farm player may be brought up only after confirmation that there will be no more than 9 players at the game. If a 10th player shows up prior to game time unexpectedly, the manager will discuss the situation with the child's parents and be sure that there is an understanding of commitment to game schedules. This child may play in the game, however, he/she will not be allowed to play more than every other inning for the duration of the game. If a child shows up after the first pitch has been thrown and a farm player is in place, this child is not allowed to play for the duration of the game. Again, the child's parents need to be spoken with.
- 10.7 A farm player **must** play at the least every other inning. However, when the number of players on the team is 10, the team manager cannot play a farm team player more than anyone else on his roster. This is accomplished by rotating the farm player in and out every other inning.
- 10.8 The farm player **may not pitch** under **any** circumstances. In addition, he may not play the infield more than two consecutive innings.
- 10.9 The sole purpose of the farm team is to avoid recording an out when batting short and to compete evenly on defense, it is not to bring in ringers and high grade talent. The positions that are to be filled should be positions that will not upset your current roster.
- 10.10 The farm player(s) must be put at the bottom of the batting order ... no exceptions. Any unresolved infractions of the above stated rules will result in a game forfeiture.

11 ADDITIONAL RULES

- 11.1 The home team will provide two game balls and the visiting team will supply one.
- 11.2 The divisional commissioner must approve any changes to these rules. To apply any rule changes for the game(s), the commissioner or his representative must advise the managers, umpire and official scorekeeper before the start of the game.
- 11.3 These rules are applicable only in non-tournament play and non-disciplinary reasons.

12.0 PROTEST RULE

There are no protests. Umpire is the final decision maker in all cases and those decisions are final. If a manager during a game feels the umpire is wrong under our rules, the manager has 90 seconds to produce the rule and show it to the umpire.