

2023 BRECKSVILLE-BROADVIEW HEIGHTS-BROOKLYN HEIGHTS- INDEPENDENCE-SEVEN HILLS-VALLEY VIEW PONY LEAGUE RULES

THE FOCUS OF THE BOYS PONY LEAGUES IS TO EXPAND ON THE FUNDAMENTALS OF BASEBALL WITH BOYS AGES 13 THROUGH 15 (as of August 1, 2023).

1. UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

- Tennis shoes or cleats are permitted. No hard sole shoes or metal spikes.
- Catchers must wear a helmet, mask, chest & throat protector, chin guards and cup.
- A catcher mask must be worn by the warm-up catcher (excluding coaches).
- Batting helmets are mandatory at bat, on base and in the on-deck circle.
- Mouth Guards are recommended (players must provide their own).
- The legal bat weight is -10 oz. max. 2 5/8" barrel max.
- Wood bats are permitted, provided that the bat has been inspected by and approved by the umpire. The bat should be in good condition, and be free of chips, cracks, etc.

2. THE GAME: American League rules apply except where otherwise noted.

- The game shall consist of seven (7) innings or the reaching of the time limit.
- A maximum of 5 runs can be scored per inning until the last inning. The umpire will declare the final inning after conferring with the managers, and the declared final inning **ONLY** will be played as an unlimited runs inning. If there is not agreement between the managers and umpire on declaring the final inning, then the umpire's decision is final.
- A pitcher who hits three (3) batters during a game must be removed from pitching for the remainder of the game
- No new inning will be permitted to start after ninety (90) minutes have elapsed from the scheduled game time. If a game is tied after seven (7) innings, one (1) extra inning can be played if the time limit has not been reached. If the game remains tied after the extra inning the game will end in a tie (all aspects of this rule are enforced without exception in all games.)
- The umpire can call a game when conditions such as rain, lightning, or darkness, makes it dangerous to continue.
- All games shall be temporarily suspended if lightning or threatening weather is present.
- If a game is called because of rain, darkness, etc. by the umpire, the following applies:
 1. If 4 innings have been completed, it is considered a complete game.
 2. If the home team has scored more runs in 3 1/2 innings than the visiting team has scored in 4 innings, it is considered a complete game.
 3. If neither #1 nor #2 above has been satisfied, the game will be considered a rain-out and replayed from the start without innings being charged to the pitchers.
- If the last inning (be it the 5th, 6th, 7th, or an extra inning) is unduly long so that darkness or field conditions would endanger the safety of the players, the game shall be called and the score shall revert back to the last completed inning. This is an umpire's decision. The only exception to this rule occurs when the visiting team has taken the lead in the top of the inning during which the game was suspended, and the home team did not complete its last at bat. In this instance, the game will be suspended and resumed at a future date if the schedule permits.
- All suspended games shall be completed from point of suspension. Managers should check with each other once a game has been suspended as to the number of outs, the position of runners, etc. In a suspended game, pitchers previously used in the game cannot return to the mound.

2. THE GAME (continued)

- Games that are not considered regulation shall be rescheduled and started at beginning of game.
- If after four (4) innings, one team leads by ten (10) or more runs, the game will be considered complete.
- The first team listed on the schedule is the Home Team.
- Home Team takes first warm-ups. Visiting Team must be allowed equal warm-up time.
- Pitching (violation of pitching rules constitute forfeit of game)
- Pitching Mound: 54 ft. from back of home plate.
- Pitching eligibility runs Monday through Sunday.
- Pitching eligibility for 13-year old and 14-year old players (as of August 1 of current season) is 3 innings per game.
- Pitching eligibility for 15-year old players (as of August 1 of current season) is 2 innings per game. **Additionally, the TEAM is limited to no more than 4 innings (12 outs) pitched by 15-year olds per game.** Managers shall notify the opposing team of which players are age 15 as of August 1 of current season before the game begins.
- Pitchers committing a balk will be given 1 warning per game per pitcher. All additional violations will be called a balk.
- Pitchers will be given 4 warm-up pitches between innings; new pitchers will be given 6 warm-up pitches.
- There will be no ‘Hidden Ball’ tricks.
- Replaced pitchers cannot return to pitch in the same game even if he is not removed from the game.
- Coaches may make 2 trips to the pitcher’s mound per pitcher. The 2nd trip will constitute removal of the pitcher.

3. BATTER/RUNNER

- Bases: Eighty (80’) feet
- Team must use a continuous batting order.
- Every player in the line-up must bat.
- Late arriving players must be inserted at the bottom of the original batting order.
- Batters shall not throw the bat. Umpire will assign one warning per team per game. The batter will be called out on the second violation.
- If a coach physically helps his or her player in any way or interferes with the opposing team’s players the umpire will either call the runner out or award the next base to the interfered team.
- A courtesy runner is allowed only due to an injury sustained in the game. The last out will be the courtesy runner.
- The Slide or Give-Up rule is in effect. Base runners must “slide or give up” at all bases (except 1st) and home plate on all close plays. A legal slide **MUST** be feet-first with no malicious contact. If any malicious contact occurs, the runner shall be called out and immediately ejected for the remainder of the game. A malicious contact determination is made at the umpire’s discretion.
- A runner is permitted to slide head-first only when returning to a base i.e. pickoff attempt, trying to avoid being doubled off on a fly out, etc.). Any violations are made at the umpire’s discretion and will result in the runner being called out.
- Once the pitcher has control of the ball, any base runner that is between bases must commit to trying to advance to the next base or must commit to returning to the previous base – a runner(s) CANNOT stop or pause at this point or he can be ruled out. The defense can attempt to make a play on any runner(s) in this scenario.

3. BATTER/RUNNER (continued)

- Speed up rule for catcher with 2 outs is permitted at the manager's discretion.
- Last out will be the designated runner.
- Dropped third strike rule is in effect. When a third strike is not caught, the following applies:
 - The batter is out if first base is occupied at the time of the pitch and there are less than two outs
 - The batter can try to advance to first base (a) if first base is unoccupied at the time of the pitch, OR (b) if first base is occupied at the time of the pitch and there are two outs
 - A batter who does not realize his situation on a dropped third strike, and who is not in the process of running to first base, shall be declared out once he leaves the area surrounding home plate. This is an umpire's judgment call.
- When a batter walks, the ball is dead as to the batter unless a play is attempted or made on another runner; if that occurs, then the batter who walked may advance beyond first base.

4. PLAYERS/TEAM

- Teams are permitted to use 4 outfielders for a total of 10 defensive players (**no player can play as a shortfielder**). The game shall be declared a forfeit if a team fails to field 7 players within 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time.
- All players on the roster who are present at the start of a game **MUST** play at least three (3) innings per game defensively, including at least one (1) of the first four (4) innings at an infield position. No player can sit two (2) consecutive innings. If a parent/guardian has determined that their child cannot play the infield due to safety concerns, any such player(s) shall be identified during the pregame manager's meeting, and should be marked accordingly in each team's scorebook.
- If a player leaves the game early for any reason (other than an ejection), the player's spot in the batting order shall be skipped for the remainder of the game with **no out** being recorded. If a player is ejected from the game, an out will be recorded each time his position in the batting order is reached.
- In the event that a team will not be able to field at least 10 players for a game, notify the Recreation Director who will help arrange for the "call up" of a majors league player. If a player from the majors division is not willing/available to play as a "call up", teams can "call over" a player from another pony team in their home community. Call ups or call overs cannot pitch, must play at least 3 innings defensively, must bat last in the lineup, can only play the outfield defensively, and should wear the jersey of their original team. Call ups/call overs also cannot play more innings than a regular team member. The director or baseball/softball commissioner for the team's community **MUST** be notified and approve of the call up/call over, or the player will be considered ineligible. Directors or commissioners will track the use of players in these situations to make sure the same player is not being used as a call up on a repeated basis. Travel players who are not already on a roster in this league may **NOT** be used as call ups. If a community only has one team in this age group and a "call over" is needed, the community directors whose teams are playing in any impacted game(s) will collaborate on determining a reasonable call over alternative. Teams can only call up or call over enough players to have a maximum of ten (10) players present.

5. SCHEDULING

- For games cancelled by rain, home team coach must call their city league director.
- When rain cancels a game, the league directors based on field availability shall reschedule the game. Rescheduled games will be required to be played as scheduled.

5. SCHEDULING (continued)

- Any games that are cancelled due to weather must have a new date, time, and field agreed upon within 10 days of the cancelled game (the game does not need to be ***played*** within 10 days – the rescheduling process just needs to be completed). Teams must complete the rescheduling process for its earliest cancelled game before completing rescheduling of a subsequent game. For example, a game cancelled on June 2 must be rescheduled before a team can finalize plans to reschedule a game that was cancelled on June 8. Any game not rescheduled after 10 days will be assigned a date, time, and field by the home team's director or scheduler. If a team cannot make the date/time assigned by the home team's director or scheduler, the game may be declared a forfeit.

6. SCORES/UMPIRES

- The home field team's recreation department is strongly encouraged to provide an Association umpire for behind home plate. An in-house umpire (high school/college student) is permitted to cover the bases. If the association umpire fails to show up for a scheduled game, then an in-house umpire can be used behind home plate.
- Both teams should maintain a scorebook and verify scores between innings. In the case of a dispute, the home team's book is official.
- **THERE WILL BE NO PROTESTS. UMPIRES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL!**

7. SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is a priority for players and coaches.

- It is the manager's responsibility to control the actions of his or her players and parents.
 - All league participants are prohibited from using any tobacco product while on the field or on the bench. No alcohol is permitted at the field before, during, or after games – this includes spectators. Violation of this policy can result in ejection from the game and suspension from the league.
 - Littering is prohibited! Please leave the dugouts and playing field in as good of condition, or better than you found it. There are trash and recycling containers located at all fields.
 - Foul language will not be tolerated. Players and/or coaches will be given one warning. On the second offense, that person will be ejected from the game.
 - If a player charges the mound or gets into a fight for any reason, that/those players will be immediately ejected from the game and suspended from the next game. Their names must be reported to the individual city recreation director for further review and possible expulsion from the league. Do not tolerate this kind of behavior!
- **All coaches, players and parents are expected demonstrate good sportsmanship and model proper behavior at all times. A violation will result in the following:**
 - 1. Immediate ejection from that game and dismissal from the facilities for the remainder of the day.**
 - 2. Any ejection will result in an additional two game suspension from the facilities.**
 - 3. Any manager or coach ejected from two or more games during the season may not be permitted to manage or coach the following season pending review by the City Athletic Director.**
 - 4. Any physical contact done in anger or in an attempt to intimidate will result in immediate expulsion from participating in the program indefinitely.**
 - 5. If any offender is asked to leave the grounds and fails to do so, the game will be suspended until the offender leaves the premises. Failure to do so may result in a forfeit.**
 - In the event the decision of the umpire is in dispute, both team managers shall approach the umpire away from the crowd and discuss the situation in a professional manner. They shall then abide by the final decision of the umpire. If a manager or coach persists in un-sportsmanlike behavior, they will be subject to ejection from the game and the field.