

North Shore Youth Baseball League

2019 Pony Rules

The North Shore Youth Baseball League (NSYBL) Pony Division shall play according to official IHSA rules, subject to the following set of 'local' amendments and interpretations. These amendments and interpretations incorporate a selected group of official Pony baseball and locally designed rules. Rules are subject to change with NSYBL Board Approval.

Section A – Playing Field

1. Distance *between bases* shall be 80 ft.
2. *Pitching distance* shall be 54 ft. from the front of the pitching rubber to the back of the home plate.
3. Distance from the point at the back of *home plate to the center of second base* shall be 113 feet 2 in.

Section B – Game

1. Pre-game Meeting: Prior to all games, coaches from both teams must meet together with the umpire to cover the field ground rules and discuss any concerns.
2. Duration: Starting the games on time is the responsibility of the umpire and the coaches. A regulation Pony game shall consist of not more than seven (7) innings. In the event of a tie after seven innings, extra innings may be played – weather, daylight and time permitting.
3. Time Limit:
 - a. There is 2 hour time limit beginning from the scheduled start of the game. A new inning may not begin after the 1 hour and 50 minute point from the start of the game.
4. Suspended / Called & Tie Games:
 - a. If a game is called (weather, etc.), the game is complete, or considered an official game, if the losing team has had at least four (4) innings at bat. If the losing team has not had four (4) innings at bat, the game shall be started where it was called, only if a minimum of (2) innings has been played. If a game is called and none of these criteria are met, the game shall be replayed from the beginning, as a new game.
 - b. For replayed games, players not present at the initial playing of the game, but who are present at the make-up game, must be placed at the end of the batting order. If a player is not present at the make-up game, but was present at the original game, his/her name will be deleted from the batting order, with all players moving up to fill in the missing player's batting order.
 - c. Regular Season games may end in a Tie.
 - d. Any PLAYOFF game may not end in a tie. If darkness, weather or a scheduled game following prevents completion of the game, the game will be completed on the next available day.
5. Weather Conditions:
 - a. Individual programs will utilize their own game cancellation policy but will ensure that the visiting team is notified at least 120 minutes prior to game time via email or by phone. This time frame may be weather dependent.
 - b. At the game/field, the coaches shall decide whether a game shall be started due to weather conditions. The scheduled plate umpire is the field supervisor and shall make the call if he or she determines the situation is too dangerous.
6. Umpires: The umpires shall have the only voice in interrupting play once a game has begun. Time out requested by a coach or player is subject to approval of either umpire.
7. Slaughter/Mercy Rule: Shall be 12 runs after 4 innings and 10 runs after 5 innings.
8. Behind the Backstop: No players or parents are allowed behind the backstop at any time during the game or between innings. The coaches and umpire should assist in clearing the area behind the backstop.

Section C – Coach's Responsibilities

1. Dugout: When a team is at bat, ALL players must be behind the dugout fence, except for the next two batters and a pitcher/catcher that need to warm-up for the next inning. To avoid injury to a fielder fielding a foul-ball, equipment should be behind the fence or in the dugout.
2. Foul-balls: When a ball is hit in foul territory, but in the playable area, any spectator, coach, or other player not playing in the field may not attempt to catch the ball. The hit ball is considered live and in play and THE BATTER IS CALLED OUT if interference is involved.

3. Listed Coaches:
 - a. During any game, LISTED COACHES ONLY or coaches designated as such to the plate umpire prior to the game are allowed on the playing field area. Everyone else is required to be behind the player's bench or in the bleachers. Spectators, including family members and friends, and non-players are NOT to be around the coaches, players, or the bench. Non-coaches keeping the scorebook should be behind the player's bench or in the bleachers. Coaches must reinforce this rule for safety and to keep the game a structured, learning environment.
 - b. The coaches from both teams are required to review any ground rules with the umpire(s) prior to the start of the game.
 - c. The coaches must encourage players to "hustle" on and off the field to allow the game to keep a steady pace and provide an opportunity to complete the game.
 - d. The coaches must encourage ALL PLAYERS on his/her team to play different positions during the game.
4. Home Team Coaches Responsibility is to:
 - a. Provide an IHSA Patched, or equivalent in skill and maturity, umpire.
 - b. Provide at least two (2) new game balls for the umpire.
 - c. Allow visiting team to warm-up in the field first, time permitting.
 - d. Occupy the third base dugout.

Section D – Pitching, Batting & Fielding

1. Pitching & Catching:
 - a. *Rest:* Any one pitcher may pitch a maximum of 4 innings per game and a maximum of 8 innings per week. A 'week' will run from Monday through Sunday.
 - b. *Uniform:* The pitcher must wear a regulation hat and tucked in uniform.
 - c. *Coaches Visits to the Mound:* A coach may visit his pitcher, catcher and one infielder on the mound one time an inning. The pitcher, catcher and one infielder are the only three players that the coach may call into the meeting on the mound. The second time the coach visits the same pitcher on the mound in the same inning he must remove his pitcher. The only exceptions to this rule are in the case of any injury, or if time out is called by the opposing team or by the umpire.
 - d. *Types of Pitches:* Fast balls and change-ups are the only pitches that may be thrown. No pitches that cause a twisting and or turning of the arm are allowed. NO CURVEBALLS.
 - e. *Hit Batters:* A pitcher MUST be removed from the game if; they hit 3 batters in 1 inning or 5 batters over the course of their selected innings pitched.
 - f. *Balks:* One warning will be given to each pitcher on their first balk of the game. The second offense will result in runners advancing one base
 - g. *Intentional Walks:* There are no intentional walks
 - h. *Warm-up Pitches:* Every new pitcher is allowed eight warm-up pitches. Every inning thereafter, the returning pitcher is allowed five warm-up pitches; and
 - i. *Warm-up Catcher:* Any player warming up the pitcher before or during the game must wear a catcher's mask and helmet.
 - j. *Travel Players at Catcher Position:* Travel players may play this position for a maximum of 2 innings per game, per player.
2. Batting:
 - a. *Continuous Batting Order:* Continuous batting order is used and once the game has begun the batting order may not be changed, unless due to an injury. Any player that is late will bat last in the order. Any batter that leaves a game early or gets hurt will force all batters after to move up a spot. All players who are present at the game will bat in continuous order, regardless of whether the batter sat out fielding the last half-inning. Coaches are encouraged to change their batting order every game in order to give all players the opportunity to gain a feeling of success and high self-esteem. During the end of the season tournament, a coach may set his continuous batting order as he/she sees fit;
 - b. *Drop Third Strike:* The dropped third strike by the catcher rule will be in effect all Season;
 - c. *Bunting:* Bunting is allowed at all times. The batter is out if he/she bunts foul on the third strike.

3. **Fielding:**

- a. *Playing Time:* No player shall sit 2 innings or more before ALL players have sat 1 inning. The substitution system should make a full circle before the same players have to sit out again for the inning in the field. Every player must play a minimum of three innings in the field each game;
- b. *Positions:* Coaches must give every player an equal opportunity to play every position that the player wishes to try. Rotate the positions through the course of the season so that every child can gain a positive feeling of accomplishment;
- c. *Players on the Field:* The field consists of nine players-six infielders and three outfielders. The three outfielders must play on the outfield grass. With the exception of pitchers, players may enter or re-enter the game defensively only at the half inning when their team is taking the field (or at anytime if due to an injury). Pitchers may be replaced at any time from either the bench or the field, provided the pitcher being replaced has pitched at least one defensive out or one turn at bat, whichever comes first.
- d. *Infield Fly Rule:* If there are runners on first and second or the bases loaded with less than two outs and the batter hits a fly ball in fair territory such that the infielder can make a routine catch in the judgment of the umpire, the umpire will call the batter automatically out and the runners may advance at their own risk, but must wait until the baseball is touched by the fielder before they can leave the base to risk advancement.

Section E – Base-Running, Stealing, Lead offs, Overthrows, Dropped 3rd Strike

1. **Leadoffs:** Allowed at 1st and 2nd. A player may go half way down 3rd base line. A player cannot steal home on a throwback to pitcher. If player attempts to steal on throwback to pitcher player will be sent back to 3rd base and given a warning.
2. **Stealing:** Allowed at all bases, except Home, however, a runner may score on a passed ball. Stealing will also be treated like the league Slaughter Rule. If a team is up 12 runs or more after 4 innings, they must cease stealing, until they are no longer winning by 12 runs or more. Then, the same will apply if a team is winning by 10 runs or more after 5 innings of play.
3. **Sliding:** All base runners must slide directly toward the base they are going to or make an effort to avoid any contact with a fielder while still running in the base line. In the judgment of the umpire, any base runner that makes illegal contact with the fielder causing the fielder to drop or misplay the baseball will result in the base runner being called out. If the base runner intentionally attempts to run into a fielder, the umpire will immediately call the play dead, call the runner out, send all other base runners back to the nearest base and eject the player that made the flagrant contact from the game;
4. **Fake Tagging:** The fielding team cannot in any way deceive the base runner by making a fake tag or telling the runner what to do on the base paths. If the fielder attempts to deceive the base runner in any way the runner will be awarded an extra base which would force all other runners to move up a base if the situation warrants it. After the first offense by any fielder in the game the umpire will give a verbal warning to both teams. If either team does it a second time in the game, the player that attempts to deceive the runner will be thrown out of the game;
5. **Pinch Running:** Pinch running for the catcher will be allowed with two outs, lasted batted out will run. All players must run the bases for themselves. Exception, if a player is physically hurt, a pinch runner may be used. The player who made the last out shall be the pinch runner. If the injured player misses his next at bat, he may not play the remainder of the game;
6. **Overthrows by Fielders on Batted Balls:** If a batted baseball is overthrown from an infielder or outfielder to any base and the ball goes out of play, all base runners get the base they were going to plus one (from the time the ball was thrown). If the baseball is overthrown from an infielder or outfielder to any base and the ball stays in play, all base runners may advance as many bases as they risk; and,
7. **Base-runner Substitution:** In the event a substitution must be made for a runner, his/her replacement must be the last member of their team to have made an out in that game. If there has been no previous outs made by his/her team in that game, the replacement runner must be the last player in the batting order.

Section F – Drafting Substitutes

Eight (8) players from your original roster constitute a starting team in Pony. You must have at least the above amount to start a game. If a team would like to draft a player to make nine (9) players, the Coach may ONLY draft a player from Bronco level to participate in that game. If this occurs, the coach of the team who drafted a substitute MUST declare that at the pre-game meeting. A coach may not draft additional players to exceed a nine-player roster. When a player is activated for a regular season game, the player must bat at the bottom of the order and must play an outfield position. Under NO circumstance can a coach draft any player to participate in a playoff game. A coach must utilize the roster of available players from their original roster. *NOTE:* Any player who does not participate in 50% of the regular season may not participate in the playoffs. Exceptions to this rule can be brought before the NSYBL Board and its Commissioner.

Section G – General Rules

1. Trees: Although no trees are in fair territory on any of the actual playing fields between foul lines, there may be trees growing in foul territory, with branches extending over fair territory. A batted ball striking a part of a tree in fair territory shall be called a “no pitch” A batted ball striking a part of a tree in the foul area shall be called a “dead ball” and shall be considered a foul ball strike.
2. Ground Rule Double: Any fair ball that rolls beyond the ends of an outfield fence, or gets hung up or lost in shrubbery (fair territory) shall be considered a ground rule double. If there is a runner that is attempting to advance a base during this occurrence, the runner shall be awarded the base he/she is advancing to plus one base. If a runner is attempting to advance from first to second base on the pitch and a ground rule double is awarded, the runner shall have the right to advance to home plate. Any ball that bounces off an outfielder’s glove or body, and lands over the outfield fence shall be called a home run.
3. Other: Any ground rules not covered herein shall be agreed upon by both coaches and the plate umpire preceding the start of the game.

Section H – Bat Rules

All bats with a maximum barrel of 2 3/4” diameter, a maximum length of 34 inches, BPF 1.15 and with a maximum differential of -8, made of wood, metal or alloy will be allowed. All BBCOR bats meet these standards. USA Stamped bats will also be allowed.

If team is in violation of the bat rules violating player and coach will be given warning. If it happens again player and coach will be ejected from the game.

Section I — Uniforms and Equipment

1. *Uniform*: EVERY PLAYER must wear a complete uniform. A complete uniform includes a jersey furnished by the association and white or gray baseball pants. Any player not in uniform shall be asked not to play in the game. Shirttails must be kept in the pants at all times. If a player forgets a jersey or hat, they must wear something of like color to team’s colors.
2. *Spikes*: Metal spikes are allowed.
3. *Protective Gear*:
 - a. All players MUST wear an athletic supporter with a cup.
 - b. Protective helmets must be worn by all batters and cannot be removed while running the bases. Catchers must wear a catchers’ helmet during the game and when warming-up pitchers.
4. *Pitchers*:
 - a. All pitchers must not wear long sleeved WHITE OR GRAY SHIRTS WHILE ON THE MOUND. This makes it difficult for the batter to see the release of the ball from the pitchers hand. Pitchers, if needed, shall wear colored sleeves under their jerseys.
 - b. If goggles/glasses are needed, they must be prescription.

Section J — Protests

All rules governing the protesting of games, will be as described in the current official IHSA Rules with the exception that all protest will be heard and decided by the Board and its Commissioner. The Rules Committee will handle these types of situations.

Section K – Rule Changes

Any rule changes must be suggested to and approved by the NSYBL Board and its Commissioner. The League Commissioner must be present for the vote or the vote will be brought forth at the next meeting in which the League Commissioner is present.

Section L – Code of Conduct

Coaches, players, parents, umpires and staff should all act in a positive and supportive manner to each other. Please remember that baseball is a game, and without all of us encouraging each other and taking on our special roles, the game just would not be. As your team's Coach (Head or Assistant), you are responsible for the actions of not only yourself, but, also of your Players AND Spectators.

The plate umpire is the site official in the event a community staff member isn't present. If needed, an umpire shall warn any player, coach, or spectator guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct. If after being warned, any unsportsmanlike behavior could result in an ejection from the game/site and all such actions shall be reported to the NSYBL Board and its Commissioner. The NSYBL Rules Sub-Committee will hand down disciplinary action if needed.

Extreme unacceptable behavior or potentially dangerous behavior towards participants or others will be dealt with immediately by the community and then by league officials, if needed. A participant whose behavior is extreme will be immediately removed from the event and may be prohibited from future participation in NSYBL events.

BE A POSITIVE SUPPORTER WHETHER YOU ARE A PLAYER, COACH, PARENT, OR FAN!

1. *Post-Game:* All coaches and players must shake hands in an orderly fashion and congratulate each other on a game well played after the game has ended.
2. *Philosophy:* The NSYBL will provide equal opportunity for all players to participate in programs. No participant shall, based on race, sex, national origin, or disability, be denied equal access to programs, services, or activities.
3. *Code of Behavior:* Participants and spectators are expected to always exhibit appropriate behavior. Guidelines have been established to ensure safe and enjoyable programs.
 - a. *Unacceptable Behavior:*
 - i. Improper use of materials, equipment or facilities (such as throwing a bat or helmet in anger because of an umpire's decision);
 - ii. Objectionable gestures, abusive language or any type of profanity;
 - iii. Fighting or aggressive behavior;
 - iv. Disrespect toward players, staff, umpire or the public;
 - v. Excessive arguing with an umpire or verbal abuse of an umpire; and
 - vi. Other acts determined to be unacceptable by a Coach/Supervisor or Umpire.
4. *Consequences of Unacceptable Behavior* (may be Community specific as well). NSYBL and its communities reserve the right to skip a step in the protocol if the situation in question demands it:
 - a. First offense – the individual(s) is given a verbal reprimand, which will be reported to NSYBL;
 - b. Second offense – the individual will be suspended from NSYBL events, number of days to be determined by the NSYBL Rules Committee;
 - c. Third offense – the individual(s) will be removed from all NSYBL events for the remainder of the season. The Board of NSYBL must approve reinstatement of said individual(s).
5. *Spectators:* Spectators play an important role in the success of the NSYBL. Children learn best by example. Good sportsmanship and support by spectators is expected. Spectators must follow the same Code of Conduct

guidelines as Players and Coaches. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in expulsion from the program area.

By signing below, you are acknowledging the details listed above and understand disciplinary action may be taken by NSYBL officials in the event this Code of Conduct is breached in any way shape, or form.

Coaches Name (print)

Signature

Community

Date