

PONY BASEBALL
2023
Rules and Regulations for



SHETLAND LEAGUE

West Zone

Tournament Rules

In addition to the rules stated herein, all games are subject to the 2023 PONY Baseball Rules & Regulations and/or Official Rules of Major League Baseball

Revised 10/29/2022

1. PLAYING FIELDS:

- A.** Pitching Distance: 38 feet (Machine Pitch)
- B.** Distance between bases: 50 Feet
- C.** The recommended homerun fence distances:
 - 1)** Foul Line: 125 ft minimum to 150 ft maximum
 - 2)** Centerfield: 125 ft minimum to 150 ft maximum
- D.** A 2-foot vertical line will be drawn halfway between each base to assist the umpire in determining where to place the runner when a batted ball is dead.
- E.** Ten foot horizontal lines will be drawn 20 feet from the base lines and second base to determine where the outfield begins and the infield ends.
- F.** No arc is to be drawn in front of home plate to determine whether the ball has traveled a certain distance.

2. EQUIPMENT:

- A.** The Louisville Slugger UPM 45 and the UPM 50 Pitching Machines are the Official **PONY** Baseball Pitching Machine for Shetland Tournaments and is the only pitching machine approved for Shetland Tournament Play.
- B.** Safety baseballs, both leather and vinyl are the baseballs required. **PONY** Officials shall have the final approval on all game balls. **MANDATORY:** Flexi Ball-Level 5 for Shetland 5 tournaments and Level 10 for Shetland tournaments.
- C.** T-Ball bats with the USA Baseball mark will be allowed.
- D.** **PONY** Recommends: That an extended safety base be used at first base.
- E.** **PONY** Recommends: That players in the pitching position wear a protective product designed to protect the heart.

3. TOURNAMENT PITCHING:

- A.** Pitching Machine **ONLY**. See Equipment 2A above.
(Recommended settings for the machine: Power Lever = 2: Micro Adjust = 3: Release Block = 4). **Settings may be adjusted by the Tournament Director to achieve a good strike pitch. The offensive team may adjust the Micro Adjust screw to adjust the height of the ball and may adjust the base arm of the machine to adjust inside/outside unless the base is permanently mounted to the ground.**
- B.** The player fielding the pitcher's position shall take a position five (5) feet to the rear of the pitching machine and 3 feet to the left or right. A two (2) foot line will be drawn at this position. The player must keep at least one foot on this line until the start of the pitch. If the other foot is free it will be on the side of the line extending away from the pitching machine.
- C.** If a batted ball strikes the coach pitcher, the ball is dead, the pitch counts as a foul strike and no runners shall advance.
- D.** If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory, the ball is in play. If the deflected ball hits a runner in fair territory he/she is not out, and the ball is live and in play.
- E.** If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and goes into foul territory, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base and all runners advance one base.
- F.** The coach who is feeding the pitching machine may give coaching instructions to batters and baserunners however may not in any way interfere with the defensive players. The coach pitcher must operate the machine in accordance with the operation manual. **(PENALTY):** The coach pitcher shall be warned once and if a second infraction occurs the coach pitcher must be removed for the remainder of the game as the pitcher and a new coach pitcher put in his/her place.

- G. If a live ball hits the coach operating the pitching machine, or in the umpire's judgment the coach interferes in the fielders attempt to make a play, the ball is dead and the lead runner is out. If in the umpire's judgment the ball is intentionally thrown at the coach, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.

4. PLAYING RULES:

- A. Game length shall be five (5) innings, unless the score is tied. In this event the game will be played to its conclusion.
- B. All players present will bat. Once the batting order is submitted to the scorekeeper it will not be changed, except for injury, illness or ejection. When a player is removed from the lineup due to injury, sickness, ejection, or other reason, the lineup will be collapsed. No automatic out will be used. The player that was removed from the lineup shall not return to that game in any capacity.
- C. A batted ball becomes dead when an infielder has possession and control of the ball in the infield (*see 1-E for where the infield begins*) or at a base and holds the ball over their head.
- D. Defensive and Offensive Substitutions:
 - 1) Minimum of nine players shall be used defensively with a maximum of ten. There will be free defensive substitutions.
Teams must have a player at the pitcher and catcher position. Catchers are allowed to defensively field the position.
 - 2) There shall be a maximum of four outfielders, stationed not less than 20 feet behind the baseline when the coach pitches the ball.
- E. Offensive coaches will be stationed in the coach's boxes and as a coach feeding the pitching machine. The fourth coach will be in the dugout or designated area. One defensive coach will be behind the catcher *or designated area as directed by the umpire in consultation with the Tournament Director*. The other defensive coaches must remain in the dugout or designated area (not along the fair/foul lines).
- F. If a live ball hits the coach operating the pitching machine, or in the umpire's judgment the coach interferes in the fielders attempt to make a play, the ball is dead and the lead runner is out. If in the umpire's judgment the ball is intentionally thrown at the coach, the ball is dead and all runners advance one base.

5. BATTERS:

- A. Are not permitted to bunt. (**Penalty:** The batter shall be called back to the plate, the swing is a foul-strike, the ball is dead and no runners may advance).
- B. The batter is out if failing to reach base after a maximum of six (6) pitches or after 3 strikes from the coach pitcher feeding the machine. The batter is not out on a foul ball if it is the 6th pitch or any subsequent pitch that is also a foul ball.
- C. The batter is out on a foul tip (SEE MLB DEFINITION OF TERMS FOR FOUL TIP) if it is also the 3rd strike regardless of the pitch number. The batter is out on a foul tip if it is the 6th pitch or any subsequent pitch.

6. RUNNERS:

- A. Runners are not permitted to steal or lead off, and shall remain in contact with the base until the ball *crosses the plate*. (**Penalty: PONY Rule Book 9G**).
- B. On a batted ball runners may advance until an infielder has control of the ball *in the infield (see 1-E for where the infield begins)* or at a base and holds the ball up. Once the ball becomes dead and in the judgment of the umpire the runner has not gone entirely beyond the halfway point between the bases, the runner will be required to return to the base in which they are coming from.

7. MERCY RULES:

- A. If the visiting team is leading by 15 runs at the end of 3 complete innings or 10 runs at the end of 4 or more complete innings, the game shall be declared complete and the visiting team shall be declared the winner.
- B. If the home team is leading by 15 runs at the end of 3 complete innings or 10 runs after the visiting team has completed batting in the 4th inning or later, the game shall be declared complete and the home team shall be declared the winner.
- C. Maximum five (5) runs per half inning.
 - (1) No maximum runs apply in the 5th and all subsequent innings.