



## **MURRIETA VALLEY PONY BASEBALL**

*a sanctioned league of PONY Baseball, Inc.*

### **OPERATING POLICY / PROCEDURE**

## **LOCAL RULES**

### **Policy:**

Murrieta Valley PONY Baseball shall establish local rules appropriate to the age group, consistent with the player's advancement through the various division of play and as allowed by the official rules of PONY Baseball, Inc.

### **Procedures:**

Note: No part of this policy shall be interpreted as superseding the Constitution or By-Laws of Murrieta Valley PONY Baseball.

**1.0** Murrieta Valley PONY may establish rules specifically for use during League play ("local rules") which differ from the official PONY rulebook. These rules shall be approved by the Board and stated in this document. The umpire, Division Director and the Board of Directors each and all have the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in these rules.

### **2.0 GENERAL LEAGUE RULES:**

**2.1** All games shall be played in accordance with official PONY Baseball Rules and Regulations and the Rules of Major League Baseball, subject to the General League Rules defined in this document.

**2.2** All divisions shall bat the roster and employ free defensive substitutions subject to the minimum play rules defined in this document. Exception: The pitcher may not return to pitch once removed.

**2.2.1** If a player is unable to bat due to injury, illness or other reason, that player shall be recorded as an out one time and one time only, then removed from the lineup. NOTE: No penalty shall be assessed in the Shetland or Pinto divisions.

**2.2.2** If a player is unable to bat due to ejection, that player shall be recorded as an out every time that spot comes up in the lineup.

**2.2.3** Once removed from the lineup, the player may not return to the game.

**2.3** Minimum playing time

**2.3.1** Each player shall be required to play one-half of each game when in attendance at the start of a game. One-half game shall be defined as:

- Four to 5-1/2 innings: Two (2) innings (six defensive outs)
- Six to seven innings: Three (3) innings (nine defensive outs)

**2.3.2** No player shall sit two (2) consecutive defensive innings in a row.

**2.3.4** Each player shall receive at least one (1) at bat in every game.



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- 2.3.5** Allowances may be made only for games shortened by rain, darkness or other unforeseen circumstances such as injury or illness. No allowances shall be made for any game played the regulation number of innings.
- 2.3.6** Penalties
- 2.3.6.1** An official protest must be filed against the team violating the minimum play rule in accordance with the PONY rulebook.
- 2.3.6.2** If upheld:
- The game is forfeit (if the winning team is found in violation);
  - The manager is suspended for the next scheduled game.
- 2.3.6.3** The player shall start the next scheduled game and play the time missed from the previous game and at least the minimum for the current game.
- 2.3.6.4** The Board of Directors may further sanction repeat offenders.
- 2.3.7** Murrieta Valley PONY strongly recommends that all managers and coaches provide more than the minimum playing time.
- 2.4** Safety / Malicious Play
- 2.4.1** Baserunners shall slide or avoid contact with the defensive player during a play at any base, including home. Incidental contact, in the judgment of the umpire, may be allowed.  
PENALTY: The baserunner shall be called out.
- 2.4.2** A player may be ejected from the game for play deemed by the umpire to be unsafe or intended to harm an opposing player.
- 2.5** Time Limits  
A time limit may be placed on games for scheduling purposes. All games played that day shall be subject to the time limit (no exemption for the last game of the day). Specific time limits are defined in this document.
- 2.6** The Home team shall be the official scorekeeper and shall record the final score and each pitcher's pitch count for the game, both home, and visitors.
- 2.7** For scheduling purposes, no infield warm-up will be allowed before games.
- 2.8** Season halves  
Where season halves are specified for rules changes or standings, the halfway point shall be determined to be one of the following as specified by the Division Director prior to the start of the season:
- after exactly one-half of the games in the division have been played; or
  - after the lesser number of games have been played (if an odd number of games are scheduled for the season); or
  - after precisely one half of the play days have elapsed (for divisions whose teams play an uneven schedule where half of the games played would occur on different weeks for each team)



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- 2.9** The 10-run (“mercy”) rule will not be in force in any division of Murrieta Valley PONY.
- 2.10** No manager, coach, player, parent or spectator shall misuse or abuse League fields. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Hitting into fences (“pepper”);
  - Scuffing holes into the outfield turf;
  - Striking home plate violently or excessively with the bat;
  - Defacing walls, screening, fences, bleachers or other fixed assets;
  - Misuse, abuse or breakage of field equipment and/or machinery (pitching machines, chalkers, motorized equipment, field tools, etc.).
- PENALTY: A warning shall be issued to both benches. The next offense from either team shall result in the ejection of the offender.
- 2.11** Ejections
- 2.11.1** Any manager, coach, player, parent or spectator ejected from a game by the umpire shall be suspended from play for the rest of the game from which he or she was ejected and shall be suspended from the next scheduled game.
- 2.11.2** The ejected party must leave the field of play immediately or else the game is subject to forfeit.
- 2.11.2.1** An ejected player shall be released to his or her parents or remain in the dugout until picked up. It is recommended that the player’s jersey be removed while in the dugout. Once in the custody of the parents, the player must leave the premises, out of sight and sound of the playing field.
- 2.11.2.2** Any ejected adult must leave the premises immediately, out of sight and sound of the playing field.
- 2.11.3** A subsequent ejection shall result in a two-game suspension; a third ejection shall result in suspension for the remainder of the season, including post-season and all-star play. The Board of Directors may further sanction repeat, habitual or flagrant offenders.
- 2.11.4** Ejections are not subject to appeal.
- 3.0** **DIVISION RULES**
- 3.1** **Philly division rules**
- 3.1.1** Philly batters shall hit from a batting tee and shall bat until the ball is put into play.
- 3.1.2** A 15 ft. arc shall be applied in front of home plate between the first- and third-base lines. Any batted ball must go beyond this arc to be considered “in play”.
- 3.1.3** All players in attendance shall bat (“batting the roster”)
- 3.1.4** All players in the lineup shall bat each inning. No outs will be recorded.



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- 3.1.5** The last player to bat in the inning shall be allowed to run the bases in their entirety for a “home run”. Managers shall adjust the lineup during the game to allow various players to hit the inning-ending “home run” and are encouraged to make sure that every player has an opportunity to hit the inning-ending “home run” throughout the season.
- 3.1.6** Players waiting to bat shall remain in the dugout until their turn to bat. No player shall be allowed in the “on-deck” circle.
- 3.1.7** All players in attendance shall play defensively. Defensive alignment shall consist of 1B, 2B, SS, and 3B. The pitcher position is optional; no catcher shall be used. All remaining players shall be positioned in the outfield.
- 3.1.8** All players shall, at minimum, play one inning in the infield and one inning in the outfield in every game. No player shall play either the infield or the outfield for the entire game.
- 3.1.9** The pitcher, if used, shall keep one foot within the dirt circle around the mound area until the ball is put into play.
- 3.1.10** Infielders shall be positioned no closer than two (2) feet in front of the base path until the ball is put into play. Infielders should remain clear of the base paths to avoid collisions.
- 3.1.11** Outfielders shall be positioned a minimum of 20 feet beyond the base paths until the ball is put into play.
- 3.1.12** Play shall stop when the ball is in the position of a defensive player in fair territory in the infield. Once the play is stopped, the baserunner shall return to the nearest base without penalty. (For example, if the runner is more than halfway toward the next base, the runner shall advance to that base; otherwise, the runner shall return to the previous base.) Chalk marks may be placed along the base paths to assist in this determination. Note: Runners from home to first are awarded first if the play is stopped in this manner.
- 3.1.13** Baserunners shall be allowed to advance only one base on any overthrow, including subsequent overthrows.
- 3.1.14** No leadoffs or base stealing is allowed.
- 3.1.15** A maximum of three (3) offensive coaches and three (3) defensive coaches are allowed on the field during play. This does not include the dugout.
- 3.1.16** Coaches shall umpire the game.



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- 3.1.17** Game duration/time limit: Game shall end one hour from the scheduled start time.
- 3.1.18** No scores or standings shall be kept.
- 3.2 Shetland division rules**
- 3.2.1 Shetland shall use the “Louisville Slugger” UPM-45 pitching machine located at the prescribed pitching distance. The coach-pitcher will stand directly behind the pitching machine.
- 3.2.2 All players in attendance shall bat (“batting the roster”) and play defensively. Defensive alignment shall consist of all regular infield positions (including pitcher and catcher), plus one additional infielder (a total of seven). All remaining players shall be designated as outfielders.
- 3.2.3 First half of the season: All players in the lineup shall bat each inning, regardless of the number of outs.  
Second half of the season: Players shall bat until three (3) outs have been recorded OR five runs have scored OR the team bats through its entire lineup.
- 3.2.4 First half of the season: Managers shall adjust the lineup during the game to allow various players to hit an inning-ending “home run” and are encouraged to make sure that every player has an opportunity to hit the inning-ending “home run” throughout the first half of the season.  
Second half of the season: Batting order shall remain the same throughout the entire game.
- 3.2.5 The manager or coach shall pitch to his or her own team. The coach shall deliver no more than four (4) pitches to each batter, after which the player shall bat off the tee until the ball is put into play fairly.
- 3.2.5.1 Players waiting to bat shall remain in the dugout until their turn to bat. No player shall be allowed in the “on-deck” circle.
- 3.2.6 Play shall stop when a defensive player holds the ball in the air (requests “time”) in fair territory in the infield and is so granted by the umpire. Once play is stopped, the baserunner shall return to the nearest base without penalty. (For example, if the runner is more than halfway toward the next base, the runner shall advance to that base; otherwise, the runner shall return to the previous base.) Chalk marks may be placed along the basepaths to assist in this determination. Note: Runners from home to first are awarded first if play is stopped in this manner.
- 3.2.7 Baserunners shall be allowed to advance only one base on any overthrow, including subsequent overthrows. Advancement on an overthrow which remains in the field of play shall be at the baserunner’s own risk (the runner may be thrown out).
- 3.2.8 A maximum of three (3) offensive coaches and three (3) defensive coaches are allowed on the field during play. This does not include the dugout.



3.2.9 Coaches shall umpire the game.

3.2.10 Game duration/time limit: Five (5) innings. No new inning shall start after 1 hour.

3.2.11 No scores or standings shall be kept.

### **3.3 Pinto division rules**

#### **3.3.1 General rules (apply to both divisions)**

3.3.1.1 Defensive alignment shall consist of all regular infield positions and four (4) outfielders (total of 10 defensive players), outfielders must be positioned in the outfield grass area.

3.3.1.2 No player shall sit defensively for a second inning until all players have sat out at least one inning.

3.3.1.3 A maximum of three (3) offensive coaches and one (1) defensive coach are allowed on the field during play. This does not include the dugout.

3.3.1.4 Base runners shall be allowed to advance only one base on any overthrow of a batted ball, including subsequent overthrows. Advancement on an overthrow which remains in the field of play shall be at the baserunner's own risk (the runner may be thrown out). An overthrow shall be defined as a batted ball controlled by an infielder which is thrown to base where there is a possibility of an out and the ball is missed. A ball thrown from the outfield to the infield which is never controlled by an infielder is not considered an overthrow and is still a live ball.

3.3.1.5 No team shall score more than six (6) runs in one inning. If there are less than three outs when six runs are scored, the teams shall change sides. This does not apply in the sixth inning or extra innings. Exception: A home run over the fence shall score all runners ahead of the batter.

3.3.1.6 Game duration / time limit: Six (6) innings. No new inning shall start after 1 hour and 30 minutes.

#### **3.3.2 "Kid-pitch" style of play**

3.3.2.1 No walks shall be allowed. After four (4) balls have been issued to the batter, the coach of the batting team shall throw two (2) pitches to the batter. If the batter fails to put either pitch from the coach into play, the batter shall be out. The batter may "stay alive" by fouling off the last pitched ball.

3.3.2.2 No balks shall be called.

3.3.2.3 Base stealing

Base stealing will be allowed. The baserunner must remain in contact with the base until the pitched ball passes the batter (no leading off). Penalty: If the baserunner leaves the base early, the runner shall be called out. In the event of an overthrow on an attempted steal, the runner may not advance. The runner at third may not steal home. If a runner at third base draws a



throw from the catcher, it shall be ruled as an attempt to steal home. If successful, the player shall be sent back to third base. If the runner was ruled out on the play, however, the out shall stand. No other runners may advance and shall be in jeopardy of being put out. There shall be no dropped third strike rule.

3.3.2.4 Base runners may score from third base only on: a) a batted ball; or b) a hit batter with bases-loaded.

### **3.3.3 “Machine-pitch” / “Coach pitch” style of play**

3.3.3.1 The batter shall receive a maximum of five (5) pitches from a pitching machine or coach-pitcher. If using a machine, it shall be operated by the manager/coach from the offensive team. No walks shall be allowed. The batter shall be out after three (3) swinging strikes or if he/she fails to put the ball into play after five (5) pitches. The batter may “stay alive” by fouling off the last pitch until the ball is either put into play or a strike is recorded. Any pitch not swung at after the fifth pitch shall be recorded as a strike.

3.3.3.2 The machine, if used, shall be located on the pitching mound directly in front of the rubber. Speed on the machine shall be set to 40 mph. The coach-pitcher must be in contact with the pitching rubber. The player in the pitcher’s position must stay behind the machine / coach-pitcher and shall keep one foot inside the pitching mound circle until the ball is put into play.

3.3.3.3 No lead-offs or base stealing shall be allowed.

3.3.3.4 The catcher must take his/her position in the “catcher’s box.”

3.3.3.5 Runners may advance one (1) base at their own peril on any “passed ball.” A “passed ball” shall be defined as any pitch that goes out of the catcher’s box chalked for that purpose. The umpire may return runners who, in his/her opinion, advanced incorrectly.

3.3.3.6 Base runners may score from third base only on a batted ball.

3.3.3.7 No defensive player shall play more than three (3) innings at the same position in any single game (does not apply during playoffs).

### **3.4 Mustang / Bronco / Pony division rules**

3.4.1 Mustang games shall be played under rule 9M (1) of the Official PONY rulebook (full baseball rules).

3.4.2 Mustang games shall be played using 65-foot base paths.

3.4.3 Metal cleats are not allowed in the Mustang division.

3.4.4 Mustang only: No player shall sit defensively for a second inning until all players have sat out at least one inning.

**3.1.6** There shall be no pinch or “courtesy” runner except in the event of an injury to the base runner. The runner shall be the last recorded out.



**3.4.5 Game duration/time limit**

- Mustang: No new inning shall start after one hour and 45 minutes (1:45).
  - Bronco: No new inning shall start after two hours (2:00)
  - Pony: No new inning shall start after two hours and 15 minutes (2:15)
- Extra innings are allowed within the official PONY rules subject to these time limitations.

**3.5 Colt / Palomino division rules**

Colt / Palomino games shall be played under official PONY Baseball Rules and Regulations, subject to the general rules agreed upon between the participating Leagues prior to the start of the season.

**3.6 Unlimited division rules (8U through 14U)**

The Unlimited Division Director(s) shall establish rules for the various age groups prior to the start of play. Those rules shall reflect the intent and nature of rules the teams may expect to see during travel tournament play and may include batting, minimum play and time limit rules which differ from Recreational play.

**4 FALL SEASON RULES**

4.2 The Fall season is considered to be preparatory for the upcoming Spring season and is especially encouraged for those who are advancing to another division. As such:

4.2.1 Fall eligibility shall be based upon the following Spring season's age key. For example, an 8-year old whose birthday occurs before the following Spring season cutoff (making him or her a 9-year-old in Spring) would play in the Mustang Division in Fall.

4.2.2 Fall ball rules are typically altered to reflect the instructional nature of the season. As such, regular season Local Rules shall be in effect except as noted below:

**4.3 Playing Rules**

4.3.1 The League will not keep standings. Tie games at the end of regulation play shall remain tied (no extra innings).

4.3.2 A player unable to bat due to injury, illness or other reason shall be removed from the lineup without penalty. The penalty for ejections shall be the same as for Spring.

4.3.3 Players not starting one game shall start the next (alternating starts). No player shall sit defensively for a second inning until all players have sat out at least one inning. Equal playing time is encouraged.

**4.3.4 Lineups**

4.3.4.1 Teams may start and play games with eight (8) players.

4.3.4.2 Teams may exchange players (last outs) to fill nine (9) defensive positions.





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- 4.3.4.3 Teams may borrow players from other recreation teams in the Division to fill nine (9) defensive positions. Borrowed players may not pitch or catch.
- 4.3.4.4 AT NO TIME shall non-League members participate (e.g., friends or siblings not enrolled in MVPB). Managers using unregistered players shall be disciplined.
- 4.3.5 In recognition of the instructional nature of Fall ball, every player should play both infield and outfield during each week and throughout the season.
- 4.3.6 The slide-or-avoid rule will be in effect.
- 4.3.7 Pitching
- 4.3.7.1 To facilitate pitching development, pitch counts may be adjusted or limited at the discretion of the Division Director.
- 4.3.7.2 Balk: None in Pinto or Mustang; one warning only in Bronco and Pony.
- 4.3.8 Mustang only: A team may score no more than five (5) runs in any half inning. Exception: All runs shall count if the runs are scored as a result of an over-the-fence home run. There is no maximum run rule in the fifth and subsequent innings.
- 4.3.9 Bronco and Pony: If, after the entire roster has batted in an inning without recording three (3) outs, teams shall exchange sides.
- 4.4 At the end of the Fall season, the Division Director may elect to hold a round-robin tournament within the Pinto, Mustang, Bronco, and Pony divisions.
- 4.4.1 Rules used for this tournament shall be established by each Division Director
- 4.4.2 Because of the availability of light during the Fall and Winter months, official games shall be called after 3 innings in Pinto and Mustang (2-1/2 if the home team is ahead) and 4 innings in Bronco, Pony, and Colt (3-1/2 if the home team is ahead).
- 4.5 Colt / Palomino
- Colt / Palomino games shall be subject to the general rules agreed upon between the participating Leagues prior to the start of the season.
- 4.6 Unlimited Divisions
- If offered in the Fall season, the Unlimited Division Director shall establish rules for the various age groups prior to the start of play and may or may not be altered from the Spring Rules for the various age groups in that Division.