

**Katy PONY Baseball**  
**Rec League Ground Rules**  
**Mustang Division (Ages 9-10)**



**Managers are required to have a copy of the rules in their possession for each game.**

**Objective:** Mustang Division begins the players' training in the complete game of baseball. PONY Baseball rules and MLB rules apply unless otherwise specified.

**Sportsmanship**

- Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Umpires will maintain control and have the authority to eject or remove players, coaches or fans from the facility. Umpires should not be approached after the game under any circumstances.
- Any manager, coach, player or fan demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior may be ejected from the game and may be suspended for additional games.
- Razzing, heckling, chanting or making disparaging remarks or noises directed at opponents in any manner is prohibited. Shakers or noise makers are not allowed. For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the pitcher is preparing to deliver the pitch or as the ball is pitched. Like all rules, enforcement is subject to umpire judgment.
- Foul and abusive language will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Cursing or throwing equipment is grounds for an automatic ejection.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy for making threats or taking physical action. Any occurrence will be immediately reported to the Board and the proper authorities.

**Game Length / Time Limits**

- Games are 6 innings, but no inning will start beyond 1 hour and 20 minutes after the official starting time.
- Time begins upon umpire's notification to the managers. Subsequent innings begin the moment the third out is made (or fifth run scores) in the previous inning. The umpire is the sole judge of time.
- The game is completed when the time limit is reached and additional play will not change the outcome. If time expires while the home team is batting and winning, the umpire will announce, "*Time has expired, ball game*" before the next batter enters the batter's box, not during a player's "at bat". If time expires while the visiting team is batting and is behind in the score and can mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire will announce, "*Time has expired, we will complete the inning*". If time expires while the visiting team is batting and winning, and the home team cannot mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire will announce, "*Time has expired, ball game*".
- If a game is tied at the end of 6 innings and before 1 hour and 20 minutes has elapsed, it will go into extra innings. Games may end in a tie.
- If the umpire calls a game due to weather or other hazardous conditions, it is an official game if 2½ innings (home team leading) or 3 innings have been completed, or if the time limit has been reached.
- A maximum of 60 seconds or 5 warm-up pitches -- whichever comes first -- will be allowed between innings, with time starting on the third out. Automatic strikes may be called on offensive teams not ready, and automatic balls may be called on defensive teams not ready.

**Run Rules**

- A maximum of 5 runs allowed per inning per team (3 outs or 5 runs will constitute an inning for the offensive team).
- The game is called if a team is behind by 15 runs after 3 complete innings, 12 runs after 4 innings, or 10 runs after 5 innings.

**Scorekeeping**

- Both teams -- Home and Visitor -- will provide a scorekeeping volunteer. The Home team's scorekeeper maintains the official scorebook; the Visitor's scorekeeper manages the scoreboard and keeps the pitch count log.
- The Home scorekeeper for the first game of the day will get the official scorebook and scoreboard controller from the concession stand and bring it to the Field Press Box. Unless the game is the last game scheduled for the day on that field, the scorekeeper will leave the scorebook in the press box for the next game.
- The Visitor scorekeeper for the last game of the day will return both the official scorebook and scoreboard controller to the concession stand.
- The Home scorekeeper will fill in all game information in the scorebook, including Team Names, Date, Time, Field Number, Batting Orders, and Scorekeeper Name. The Home scorekeeper will record all runs and outs made by inning for each team throughout the game.
- The Visitor scorekeeper is responsible for keeping the pitch count log for the game. This individual must sit in the press box (or away from either dugout if the press box is not accessible), communicate pitch counts to managers

as requested throughout the game and inform the umpire when a pitcher is within 5 pitches of the limit. At the completion of the game, the pitch count log must be delivered to the concession stand and placed into the labeled slot in the hallway (do not leave the pitch count log in the scorebook at the field). Failure to deliver the pitch count log immediately after the game may result in pitchers from both teams declared ineligible for the remainder of the week.

- The scorekeeper and scoreboard operator must remain between the dugouts or in the press box so that the umpire can locate them without delay.
- Scorekeepers or others are not allowed to coach from the press box. Children are not allowed in the press box at any time.
- Scores will be posted, and standings will be maintained on the KPB website during the season to allow for proper seeding for post season play.

### **Roster**

- A minimum of 8 players must be present or the game will be called a forfeit at 15 minutes past the scheduled start time.
- There is no penalty for playing with 8 players.
- The game will be called a forfeit any time a team has fewer than 8 eligible players.
- Players who must leave before the end of the game may do so. Their position in the batting order will be ignored for the rest of the game and no out will be charged.
- If, in the umpire's opinion, a player is unable to continue playing due to injury or illness, the team will not be penalized when it is the missing player's turn to bat.
- Any time the batting order is reduced by an ejection, an automatic out will be declared in that batting order position.
- Every player present for a game is in the batting order for the duration of the game.
- Any late arriving player(s) will assume the last position in the batting order, regardless of when they arrive.
- All players must always wear proper safety equipment.
- Players must wear their league-provided Team Jersey with sponsor-funded approved advertising and Team Cap, along with baseball pants, socks and appropriate footwear (cleats) in order to participate in league play.
- Players not registered with Katy PONY Baseball and not assigned to the team are ineligible. Players cannot participate in more than one PONY baseball division (i.e., Pinto and Mustang) at the same time. Only players who have played in the Mustang division are eligible to participate in the KPB Mustang All-Star program.

### **Bat Rules**

- Managers are expected to check each player's equipment prior to each game.
- PONY Baseball has adopted the USA Baseball bat standard ([USABat Standard](#)). Except for -3 BBCOR certified, all 2 5/8", 2 1/2" and 2 1/4" barrel bats (-5, -7, -9, etc.) must be certified with the USABat licensing stamp on the bat in order to be used for play.
- The bat barrel must be no larger than 2 5/8" and no more than 42 inches in length. Bats cannot be dented, cracked, modified or misshaped.
- Penalty for use of an illegal bat: (a) If detected before the first pitch of an at-bat, the bat will be removed from the game. The batter is not out but is required to use a bat that conforms to bat regulations. The manager will be warned and will be removed from the game on a second occurrence. (b) If detected after the first pitch (whether the pitch is swung at or not) the batter is declared out and base runners will not advance. The manager will be removed from the game and may be suspended for the next scheduled game. (c) If detected after a ball is hit, the batter is out, and base runners will return to their original base prior to the hit. The manager will be removed from the game and may be suspended for the next scheduled game.

### **Batting**

- The batter must always keep one foot in the batter's box in order to speed up play. PENALTY: Umpire will call "play ball" and call the pitch a strike.
- Squeeze plays are not allowed. With a runner on third, a batter may attempt a bunt. The runner on 3B may not take a secondary lead past the dirt surface and into the grass surface of the baseline. If this point is marked by a painted/chalked white line, it supersedes the location that the base runner may not cross over or into at all. The runner can advance past this mark after the pitched ball has been bunted or reaches home plate.
- PENALTY: The runner on third is declared out and the umpire shall announce dead ball. The pitch to the batter does not count and his at bat will proceed unless the violation is the third out of the inning.
- There is no penalty for crossing this designated point when taking a secondary lead when the batter does not attempt a bunt. This does not allow an excessive lead by the runner on third base. See below under BASE RUNNING regarding an excessive lead which applies under all circumstances and is the umpire's judgement as to being a safety issue.
- Umpires will not permit more than one offensive time out in each half-inning to allow a manager or coach to talk with a batter.

- For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the pitcher is preparing to deliver the pitch or as the ball is pitched. Coaches shouting instructions to their batters or base runners may be ejected if this is judged to be disruptive to the pitcher.
- In the case of batting out of order, regular baseball rules apply -- the player who should have batted (the proper batter) is called out. Any hit or advance made by the batter is nullified.
- The penalty for throwing bats is umpire discretion and can result in an out and/or player's ejection.

### **Base Running**

- Leadoffs are permitted on all bases.
- Runners may steal any base except home. A stolen base occurs when a base runner successfully advances to the next base while the pitcher is delivering the ball to home plate.
- Runners on third base cannot steal, but can attempt to score on:
  - a passed ball or a wild pitch;
  - an overthrow by the catcher returning the ball to the pitcher;
  - a throw to a base by the catcher or pitcher.
- An excessive leadoff at third base is a safety issue and may be ruled an attempt to steal home. PENALTY: For an attempted steal of home, the runner is out when touching home plate.
- A courtesy runner may be used for the catcher or pitcher of record at any time. A courtesy runner must be used for the catcher of record when there are two outs in the inning. A courtesy runner must have made the previous out.
- Slide Rule. Runners advancing to any base with intent to break-up a double play or where a tag play is evident must slide into the base or seek to avoid contact with the player who has the ball. The runner must slide, give up, go around, or go back.
- No player will initiate malicious contact. The question of what is malicious is umpire judgment. PENALTY: The player initiating malicious contact will be ejected from the game. NOTE: There can be a collision where both players go head over heels and not be malicious contact. The key for malicious contact is "intent".
- For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the pitcher is preparing to deliver the pitch or as the ball is pitched. Coaches shouting instructions to their base runners may be ejected if this is judged to be disruptive to the pitcher.
- Batters running to first base may turn left or right, provided that if they turn left, they do not try to advance. The runner must immediately return to first after overrunning it.

### **Pitching**

- [Pitch Smart](#) guidelines will be followed for pitch count and day(s) of rest required.
- Pitchers will be required to observe the calendar day(s) of rest for the threshold reached during the game(s). There is no reversion of pitch count to the start of a player's at-bat.
- Pitching distance is 46 feet.
- The daily maximum number of pitches is 75.
- When more than one game is played on the same calendar day, a pitcher may pitch in multiple games provided they do not exceed 75 pitches total for all games.
- The Visiting Team is responsible for keeping the pitch count log for the game. This individual must sit in the press box (or away from either dugout if the press box is not accessible) and communicate pitch counts to managers as requested throughout the game.
- The Pitch Counter should inform the umpire when a pitcher is within 5 pitches of the limit.
- Umpires will not have any jurisdiction or involvement in pitch count totals.
- Managers are encouraged to monitor pitch counts each inning, as the Pitch Counter's number is final. Honest mistakes may occur; however, disputes over pitch counts will not be tolerated.
- When the 75-pitch limit is reached, the pitcher may continue until the batter reaches base or an out is scored.
- Required rest for pitchers is:
  - 0-20 pitches            0 days' rest
  - 21-35                    1 days' rest
  - 36-50                    2 days' rest
  - 51-65                    3 days' rest
  - 66-75                    4 days' rest
- Rest is counted beginning the day after pitching. For example, if a player throws 51 pitches in a Thursday night game, which requires 3 days' rest (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), that player is not eligible to pitch again until Monday. If a player throws 66 pitches Tuesday night, that player would not be eligible to pitch on Saturday, as Saturday is the 4<sup>th</sup> day of required rest.
- Any pitcher withdrawn from the mound and/or lineup, or a pitcher, who is withdrawn from the mound and stays in the game at another position, is not permitted to pitch again in the same game.

- If a relief pitcher comes in “cold” because of an injury situation, the umpire will allow the pitcher to warm up properly with at least ten pitches.
- Pitchers in violation of any of the pitching rules will be considered ineligible players for the remainder of the game.
- The pitcher named in the batting order turned in prior to the start of the game will pitch to the first batter or any substitute batter until such batter is put out or reaches first base, unless the pitcher sustains injury or illness which, in the judgment of the umpire, incapacitates them from pitching.
- Balks will be called on a pitcher after that pitcher has received one warning. Each pitcher used in a game will be allowed one balk warning per game. Subsequent balks will be enforced. Balks result in an immediate dead ball, “no-pitch”, with umpire time-out to explain infraction. Managers can participate in balk discussion; no mound trip will be charged if done immediately. If the pitcher delivers the ball to the catcher while a balk is called, that pitch is included in the pitch count.
- Intentional walks are discouraged. Intentional walks can be automatically issued at the request of the defensive team’s manager, with no impact on pitch count.

### **Defense**

- Every player must play at least 2 complete innings by the end of the fourth inning (unless a player is ill, injured or refuses to play). Failure to comply with this rule will result in a one game suspension for the manager. A second offense will result in suspension for the remainder of the season or post-season play.
- Only one timeout for defensive substitutions from the bench will be allowed during any half-inning (does not include pitching changes or injury situations).
- If a manager or coach goes onto the playing field to talk to any player or players more than once in a half inning, while the same player is pitching, a pitching change will be made. The only exceptions to this rule are in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire.
- On-field defensive switches or position changes are freely allowed, if it is not an attempt to delay the game.
- Position players cannot block a base (including home plate) without the ball.

### **Coaching**

- Teams may have no more than 3 coaches and 1 team parent in the dugout at any time.
- Players, managers, coaches and team parents must remain in the dugouts, on the benches or in the prescribed areas throughout the game.
- Teams should have no more than 3 meetings per week, not to exceed 6 hours total, including games.
- Managers must exchange line-ups before each game and should discuss ground rules at the umpire’s plate conference before the start of each game.
- Once a game starts, the umpire is in complete control; only the team manager can question a ruling after a time-out is called.
- Protests are not allowed on judgment calls. A rules protest is allowed and must be made before the next pitch.
- Umpire Evaluation Forms should be completed and turned in to the office after each game.
- Scorekeepers or others are not allowed to coach from the press box.
- Parents should never “coach” from the stands or outside the fences. Please allow your teams on field coaches to do their jobs.
- Pre-game warm-ups should be held in the outfield or common areas – no infield practice before games.
- No jewelry will be worn by any player, except for medical identification.
- Cell phones or any other type of communication device cannot be used on the field of play, in bullpens or dugouts. A laptop or tablet device can be used for scorekeeping purposes if wireless communication is disabled.
- Dugouts must be cleaned of litter before leaving.
- Tobacco and alcohol in any form is not allowed in the dugouts, buildings, stands or playing areas.

### **Post Season Tournament Rules**

- Post Season Tournament play, if applicable, will be determined by the league.
- Tournament rules will not vary from Regular season rules except for the following:
  - Post Season pitching rules will be determined by the league.
  - Balks will be called on a pitcher without warning.
  - Advancement games will be played out to a winner.
  - Time limits for the championship game will be determined by the league.
- Additional tournament rules are as follows:
  - Seeding will be determined by: (1) won-loss record, with ties counting as a half win and a half loss, (2) head-to-head – used only when 2 teams are tied, (3) total runs allowed, (4) total runs scored, (5) coin flip.
  - Home team is highest seed (lowest seed number), except Home team for the championship game is the team from the winner’s bracket, regardless of original seeding.
  - Trophies or medals awarded to the champion and runner-up.