

**Katy PONY Baseball
Rec League Ground Rules
Shetland Division (Ages 4-5)**



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

Objectives

- Shetland Division focuses totally on instruction of beginning players and is not intended to be competitive baseball.
- Team Managers and coaches will teach players to properly swing a bat, catch, throw and run the bases.
- Team Managers and coaches will teach players how to play different defensive positions throughout the season.

Sportsmanship

- Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated.
- Managers will maintain control and KPB Board Members have the authority to eject or remove players, coaches or spectators from the facility. Any manager, coach, player or spectator demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior may be ejected from the game/facilities and may be suspended for additional games.
- For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the batter is preparing to hit the ball.
- Razzing, heckling, chanting or making disparaging remarks or noises directed at team managers, assistant coaches, players, or spectators in any manner is prohibited. Shakers and any other types of noise makers are not allowed.
- Foul and abusive language will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Cursing or throwing equipment is grounds for an automatic ejection from the game/facilities and may be suspended for additional games.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy for fighting, making threats or taking physical action. Any such occurrence will be immediately reported to the Board and the proper authorities.
- Walk-up music is allowed. Music **may not** be played during pre-game warm-ups or in-between innings so that other fields are not distracted. Please adhere to the following policies when playing walk up music. The policy will be enforced by the umpire or any KPB board member.
 - **Volume should be at a level that does not distract other fields at the complex**
 - **Walk-up music needs to be turned off once the player has entered the batter's box and must remain off until the play is dead.**
 - **Music needs to be at PG level in regard to language and content**

Umpires

- Team managers or their representatives will umpire the games and are expected to follow the rules without exception.
- The batting coach at home plate shall be the umpire in charge.
- Protests are not allowed. The decision of the umpire shall be final. Use your best judgment and common sense.
- The home plate umpire (batting coach) shall declare "Time" when the ball is in the possession of an infielder.
- The home plate umpire (batting coach) is responsible for the removal prior to any play at home plate.
- The home plate umpire (batting coach) is responsible for ensuring bats are legal for T-ball play (see Equipment rules).

Game Length / Time Limits / Run Rules

- Games are a maximum of 4 innings, but no inning will start beyond 1 hour after the official starting time.
- Time begins upon the first swing at the ball by the first batter for the visiting team. Subsequent innings begin the moment the third out is made (or fifth run scores) in the previous inning. The Home Team Manager is the sole judge of time and shall communicate with Away Team Manager what the start time is.
- A maximum of 5 runs allowed per inning per team (3 outs or 5 runs will constitute an inning for the offensive team).

Coaching - Administrative

- Players must register and play in the division that complies with the league's age chart.
- Any person wanting to be considered as a Team Manager or Assistant Coach must submit an application of intention to coach to the KPB Board. All coaches must submit a form, provide a copy of a valid ID, and pass a background check.
- The KPB Board will approve all Team Managers. The KPB Board reserves the right to interview all new applicants for Team Manager.
- All Team Managers and Assistant Coaches are always expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner and must teach clean, sportsmanlike baseball. The KPB Board and/or Shetland 4-5 Division Director reserves the right to replace any Team Manager or Assistant Coach at any time for any cause upon majority vote by the Board.
- Team Managers are prohibited from requesting the KPB Board place a player on their team, or from promising any prospective player they will be assigned to a specific team. Only parents can request that their child play with a friend or a specific coach during the registration process. Requests are not guaranteed.
- Team Managers and/or assistant coaches will not recruit players during registration or during the season from within the league to support any interest they may have in an Open League team. This will be grounds for expulsion.
- All Team Managers are encouraged to conduct a team meeting with parents and players once the Team Manager has received the team roster. This team meeting is encouraged to foster good team communications, discuss expectations, identify team volunteers, field questions, discuss practice schedules, etc.
- The Team Manager is responsible for having a representative from their team attend the "Team Parent" meeting. Attendance is required.
- Team Managers are to complete and submit a schedule request form to the Shetland 4-5 Division Director if they are unavailable for practice or games any days of the week. These requests do not guarantee that a scheduled game or practice session will not conflict with the day/date(s) requested.
- Team Managers will communicate to all team members that KPB maintains a website and a rainout line to communicate field status. These are the only two sources of information (other than the Team Manager) that should be used. Under no circumstance should players or family members contact the Facility Director to check on field/game status.
- KPB Board develops all game schedules. Rainout makeup games are scheduled by the Facility Director based on first available field openings. Schedule requests are not considered for rainout makeup games.
- All concerns or questions can be directed to the Shetland 4-5 Division Director or Assistant Division Director.

Coaching – Game Play

- Teams may have no more than 4 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.
- Managers must exchange line-ups before each game and should discuss ground rules at the home plate conference before the start of each game. Line-ups must include players first name, last name, and jersey number.
- Coaching on Offense: The offensive team can have 4 coaches on the field -- 3 base coaches and a batting coach -- positioned at 1st base, 2nd base, 3rd base, and at home plate.
- Coaching on Defense: The defensive team can have 4 coaches on the field -- 2 in the outfield, 1 positioned behind the pitcher, and 1 coach behind the catcher to provide verbal instructions to the defensive team.
- Coaches are never allowed to make physical contact with a player while the ball is in play.
- Teams should have no more than 3 meetings per week, not to exceed 4 hours total, including games. Three or more players with one or more coaches present will constitute a meeting.
- Pre-game warm-ups should be held in the outfield or common areas – no infield practice before games.
- Parents should never "coach" from the stands or outside the fences. Please allow your team's on field coaches to do their jobs.
- 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 or in dugouts.
- Tobacco and alcohol in any form is not allowed in the dugouts, buildings, stands or playing areas.
- Dugouts must be cleaned of litter before leaving.
- Team Managers are required to have a copy of these rules in their possession for each game.

Roster

- There is no minimum number of players required to start a game.
- Prior to starting the game, Team Managers will exchange copies of the game lineup, including player names, uniform numbers, and batting order.
- 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 for the game.
- If 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.

- 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.
- 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., Shetland and Pinto) at the same time.
- Only players who have played in the Shetland division are eligible to participate in the KPB Shetland 4-5 All-Star program.

Equipment - The Ball

- A regulation league provided Official Tee Ball will be used for all league games. A Training Tee Ball is not an acceptable ball and is prohibited from league play. If it is discovered that a training ball is used, an out will be assigned to that team.

Equipment - The Bat

- Team 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.
- T-Ball and Coach-pitch bats cannot be used in any Division other than Shetland (T-Ball).
- Because Pinto Division uses a regulation baseball and not a safety ball, Coach-pitch bats cannot be used in the coach pitch (Pinto) Division.
- If an illegal bat is detected after a ball is hit, the batter is out, and base runners will return to their original base prior to the hit. The Team Manager will be removed from the game and may be suspended for the next scheduled game.
- Any questions regarding bats can be directed to the Shetland 4-5 Division Director.

Equipment - The Tee

- Only league-approved batting tees are allowed in the Shetland Division. Any questions regarding the type of tee can be directed to the Shetland 4-5 Division Director.

Equipment - The Glove

- It is recommended that each player bring a baseball glove of proper size and fit. Plastic toy gloves are not allowed as they can crack and can cause injury in case of glove failure. Any questions regarding gloves can be directed to the Shetland 4-5 Division Director.

Equipment - The Uniform

- 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 preferred) in order to participate in league play.

Batting

- The batting tee will be placed on top of home plate, covering home plate, by the batting coach, who is responsible for removal prior to any play at home plate.
- Batters are not allowed to adjust the tee or take practice swings after the ball has been placed on the tee. A practice swing includes the batter "measuring" or placing the bat to the tee with the ball on it.
- Batters are not permitted to bunt at the ball on the batting tee.
- The batter is allowed as many swings as needed to hit the ball. A coach may assist the batter after 10 swings.

- Any batted ball that does not travel past the first infield arc will be considered a “fair territory” foul ball. For example, if a ball is hit and remains within the foul lines but does not make it to the first infield arc, the ball will be ruled a foul ball. If the ball touches the infield arc, it is considered a “fair” ball.
- Teams should make every effort to bat the roster in order; however, there is no penalty for batting out of order (regular baseball rules state the player who should have batted -- the proper batter -- is called out, and any hit or advance made by the batter is nullified).
- Teams will not be penalized when a player leaves the game for a bathroom break or is temporarily unable to play for other reasons. When the player returns, they should be inserted in the next spot in the batting order for that rotation, and then return to their original spot in the next rotation.
- Verbal instructions to batters are permitted, but physical positioning of players is discouraged.
- Managers must instruct batters to not throw bats. The penalty for throwing bats is Manager’s discretion and can result in an out and/or player’s ejection.

Base Running

- When an out is made on a base runner, the runner must leave the field of play and return to the dugout.
- Base runners are limited to one base on all balls hit.
- Base runners are not allowed to advance on overthrows. An “overthrow” is defined as a thrown ball to a baseman that is not controlled by that baseman.
- Base runners are not permitted to steal bases and will remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit.
- The home plate batting coach shall declare “Time” when the ball is in the possession of an infielder.
- 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.
- Base runners may return to their bases without jeopardy of being put out after a fly ball is caught. When a fly ball is caught, the ball is dead, and runners may not advance.

Defense

- All players will be used defensively – six in the infield (P, C, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, SS) and the remainder in the outfield. Free substitution.
- No player may sit on the bench unless the player refuses to play or is unable to play.
- Good baseball fundamentals will be taught -- fielders will learn to throw to the proper base and will be discouraged from running down base runners to make an unassisted out.
- Infielders may not block the path of a base runner or guard the base when they are not in possession of the ball. If an infielder interferes with a base runner, an “Obstruction Call” will be signaled by the umpire (batting coach behind home plate) and the runner will be deemed safe at the base he/she was advancing to.
- No infield fly rule ... infielders must catch fly balls. When a fly ball is caught, the ball is dead, and runners may not advance. Base runners will return to their bases without jeopardy of being put out after a fly ball is caught.
- Infield position players (1st, 2nd, 3rd and SS) must remain within 3 feet of the assumed base path until the ball is put into play. The assumed base path is an imaginary line drawn directly from 1st to 2nd and from 2nd to 3rd. Players may be on either side of the assumed base path as long as the player is within 3 feet.
- Every player should play at least two innings at an infield position each game. Team Managers should provide every player with an equal opportunity to play infield and outfield to progress their development.
- Outfielders must remain in the grass approximately half way between the infield dirt and the outfield fence until the ball is put into play.
- Outfielders must throw or hand the ball to an infielder. Outfielders are not allowed to tag a base runner or run to a base to make an out.
- The catcher will stand at least 6 feet behind the tee and at an angle from the batter – towards 1st base for right-handed batters and 3rd base side for left-handed batters.
- The catcher may field the position defensively once the ball is in play but must not interfere with the batter and/or base runner.
- The catcher must always wear a batting helmet.
- The player fielding the pitcher’s position must remain in contact with the pitcher’s plate until the ball is put into play.
- There are two infield arcs that are marked on the field between home plate and the pitcher’s mound.
 - Balls fielded by the pitcher beyond the outer infield arc must be thrown to the catcher if there is a play at home.

- Balls fielded by the pitcher in between the outer and inner infield arc -- the pitcher may continue forward momentum towards home plate and attempt to make a play for an unassisted out at home plate.
- *Exception 1: Balls fielded by the pitcher that are within 6 feet of the base path (1st base or 3rd base) – the pitcher can make a tag out attempt on the base runner. This is good fundamental baseball, as the pitcher’s momentum would take them toward the base runner.*
- *Exception 2: If the pitcher is not the first defender to touch the ball, the pitcher becomes an eligible infielder able to make a play on any base runner including at home plate. The double arc only comes into play if the Pitcher is the initial defender fielding the ball.*