

# Shetland Local Rules

Updated February 2024

*Play is governed by the official PONY BASEBALL RULE BOOK, with the exception of the following:*

## Team Responsibilities for Games

- **Good Sportsmanship:** Players & Coaches are to salute the parents and other team after each game. Handshake lines are at the coach's discretion.
- **Field Duties:** Each team will designate at least one representative to help prep the field BEFORE your game as well as AFTER your game.

## Safety and Well Being of the Children

- Concern for the safety of the players, spectators, coaches and umpires will be required during all team activities including games, practices and associated events
- No practice swings by any player in or around the dugout during the games. **A coach must be stationed at the dugout entrance of the team that is at bat at all times.**
- NO tobacco or alcohol use is permitted by the coaches or spectators at the park where practices and games are played.
- Any player who throws a bat while batting will receive a warning. A second thrown bat by the same player during the game will result in another warning and possible out.
- Only adults will be base coaches.
- Players must remain in the dugout during the game, bathroom breaks or injuries are only exceptions.

## Field: As per West Region Pony Pinto Division Baseball Rules

- **Bases:** bases will be 50 feet apart
- **Pitching Machine:** distance will be 38 feet (pitching machine release to back of home plate)
- **Dugouts:** 3rd Base Dugout = HOME team and 1st Base Dugout = AWAY team
- **Infield Boundary:** Area bound by lines extending from home plate forming first and third base foul lines, and determined by two, ten-foot horizontal lines drawn 15 feet from the base lines and second base, or the border of the infield dirt and outfield grass, whichever is closer.

## **Equipment:**

- **Ball:** will be a RIF rated baseball (RIF = Reduced Injury factor: softer than regular baseball). DIAMOND Flexi Ball-Level 5 is the PONY recommended ball.
- **Bats:** no bat larger than 2-5/8 inch barrel
- **Shoes:** regular soled shoes or plastic/rubber bottom cleats (no metal cleats or spikes)

- **Batting Helmet:** MUST include a facemask (for base runners also!)
- **Pitching Machine:** The Louisville Slugger UPM 45 and UPM 50 Pitching Machines are the Official PONY Baseball Pitching Machines. Recommended settings for the machine: Power Lever = 2: Micro Adjust = 3: Release Block = 4. Settings may be adjusted by the coaches as needed to achieve a good strike pitch.
- **Catchers Equipment:** Catchers are required to wear all proper protective equipment

### **Substitutions:**

- All players will play in the field each inning. Free substitutions.
- **Safety:** recognize 1st base, pitcher, and catcher as safety positions and only place the players in these positions that best safely play these receiving positions. Barring agreed-upon safety considerations to the contrary, each player shall play at least once in the outfield and once in the infield each game.
- All players should play a different position each inning, with consideration for all players and selection of players placed in safety positions
- The infield positions are C, P, 1B, 2B, 3B, and SS. The outfield positions are LF, LCF, RCF, and RF. If more than four players for outfield positions, include centerfield, center left and center right.

### **Defense:**

- Each team should have a minimum of eight players to start the game. If a team does not have eight players, the game should still be played for practice and enjoyment of the players.
- To start play, the defensive fielding pitcher must have one foot within the dirt area of the pitcher's mound. The player must maintain this position until the ball is hit. The pitcher must set up behind an imaginary line that is perpendicular to the path of a pitched ball and runs through the wheels of the machine.
- Infielders may not start play closer to the batter than 10 feet inside the 1st/2nd and 2nd/3rd baselines. The intent of this rule is to promote safety and ensure fairness to the weaker batters.
- The catcher shall stand away from the plate until the batter swings or the ball crosses the plate, then field the position defensively.
- Outs are played and when recorded, the base runner leaves the field and returns to the team's dugout

### **Batting Order:**

- The entire roster of players present for the game shall bat in rotation each inning.
- Rotate the batting order for each game to allow all players to have an opportunity to bat in different positions within the batting order.
- A player arriving late will be placed at the end of the batting order.

### **Base Running:**

- A runner may leave the base only when the ball crosses home plate or is put into play.
- The play is deemed over when a defensive infield player has the ball within the infield (see Field section and Infield Boundary description on first page)
- On a batted ball runners may advance until an infielder has control of the ball in the infield (see Field section and Infield Boundary description on first page) or at a base and holds the ball up. Once the ball becomes dead and in the judgment of the coach at the pitching mound, the runner has not gone

entirely beyond the halfway point between the bases, the runner will be required to return to the base from which the player was advancing.

- Any close play at home plate requires a slide or the runner is out
- Fielders must stay out of the base path and stay off the base unless they are making a play on the ball. (Refer to official PONY obstruction rule).

### **Batting:**

- A batter will bat until they hit either a fair ball or has received a total of four pitches. Fouled fourth and subsequent pitches are not counted until the ball is either missed or put in play. If after four pitches and any fouled consecutive pitch(es) following the fourth pitch, a pitch is missed, the batting tee will be used.
- No bunting, fake bunting or slashing (show bunt, then swing) are allowed.
- If a player is injured and not able to continue batting, the next player will come up (no out will be recorded, no base awarded)
- There is NO Infield Fly Rule – on a pop up to the infield, base-runners advance at their own risk.

### **Pitching:**

- The Shetland Division will use a spring lever pitching machine that will be set at a slow speed that delivers even, consistent strikes. The pitching machine will be placed at a distance of 38 feet from the back of home plate to the front of the pitching machine. The batting tee will also be used as necessary and placed on home plate.
- If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory, the ball is in play.
- 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.
- A batted ball that strikes the pitching machine before touching the ground or a fielder, and is subsequently caught before touching the ground, is not an out.
- The coach feeding the pitching machine (the feeder) is part of the playing field and the ball is live after it unintentionally hits the feeder.
- A feeder may offer hitting instruction to a batter during the game (such as where to stand in the batter's box etc.) and instruction to runners while the ball is dead.

### **Innings/Game & Time Limit:**

- Maximum innings is 3
- Each team will bat through entire batting order each inning
- No new inning shall start after 75 minutes of play and game ends at 90 minutes of play or at the conclusion of 3 innings, whichever comes first.

### **Further Rules, Governance of Play:**

- **A coach from each team will umpire.** The coach feeding the pitching machine, the feeder, is one umpire and the first or third base coach is the other umpire.
- **Catcher:** Must be protected with full catcher's gear, catcher's glove and HARD skull cap
- **Late players:** Shall be added to the bottom of the batting order

- **Coaching:** Each team will need a minimum of 4 adults to manage the team during the game.
  - One adult will coach first base
  - One adult will coach third base
  - One adult will manage the dugout and the on deck batter – this adult will be positioned at the entrance to the dugout while the team is at bat.
  - One coach, from the team batting, will run the pitching machine and call the field plays
- It is permissible to coach fielders from the field of play. Coaches are allowed in the outfield during play to give instruction to defensive players.

### **Umpiring rule reminders**

- A “tie” goes to the runner
- Require “tags” to be made when necessary to record an out – please hold to this standard as it teaches proper baseball
- Base runners making 1st in the field contact with a hit ball are out and the ball is dead
- Base runners leaving the base line (effectively 2-3 feet on either side) to avoid being recorded as a “possible” out, are out

### **Field Preparation and Game Duties**

- Coaches from both teams will be responsible for field prep. First game of the day, coaches should show up 20 minutes prior for initial field setup. For the last game of the day, coaches will be responsible for removing all equipment, gear and trash from dugout, returning all field equipment to the equipment room and restoring the field surface to game playing conditions.