

# 2017 Branchburg Baseball Pony League Rules of Play for In-Town Season

## Rules

The BBC Pony League will be played under the NFHS, National Federation State High School Association rules, unless superseded below. It is the individual team's managers, coaches and players responsibility to learn these rules.

## Age Eligibility

All players in the League must be 13, 14, 15, or 16 years old prior to April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Board Exceptions for children to 'play up' will be reviewed only if they are 12 years old and are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. If a 12 year old player that is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade participates in the Pony League, they cannot also play in the National League and will not be eligible to play on the BBC 12 year old Travel Team.

If a parent requests that their 13 year old or above child should not play in the Pony league due to a disability, safety or ability issue, it may be granted by the Board upon review. All these exceptions must be granted prior to the draft.

No additions of players or changes to the rosters will be made to the Pony league team's rosters once the draft is officially completed which is when the last eligible player has been drafted on the night of the Pony draft.

## Conduct & Participation

All participants, players, coaches, managers as well as parents, are required to read the BBC Code of Conduct prior to participating in the BBC Pony League.

Any manager, coach, player, or spectator ejected from a game will receive a mandatory minimum of one game suspension and may receive further discipline from the Board upon review.

Managers, coaches and players shall not dispute, question or appeal any judgment call made by the umpires. Any manager, coach or player that questions a judgment call will be immediately ejected from the game after one warning.

Only a manager can make an appeal to the ruling umpire on their rule decision. Judgment calls such as "strikes", "balls" (unless a check swing), "safe", "out", "fair" and "foul" calls cannot be appealed.

If the manager feels the umpire has made a decision contrary to the NFHS and the BBC Pony rules, the manager or acting manager (not the coach or a player) shall call "Time Out" and, if granted, approach the umpire and discuss with the umpire their interpretation of the rule. The umpire's decision will be final. "Time Out" is only in effect after the umpire grants "Time Out". The ball is in play until then.

No game protests will be considered. The umpire's judgment will always be final.

Spectator control is the responsibility of the manager. Spectators cannot observe the games from within 25 feet behind the backstop. It is suggested that spectators observe the game on the bleachers provided. For the sake of insurance, safety, and control no non-player or non-manager is allowed on the bench or coaching the bases.

Any player using bad language or arguing an umpire's decision shall be ejected from the game. Foul or bad language is an automatic ejection.

If a manager argues and is belligerent or verbally abusive to an umpire or opposing manager, the umpire may award a victory by forfeit to the other team and will then leave the field.

If an umpire feels that a manager has lost control of their player's behavior and cannot control them, the game will be ended immediately and a forfeit will be awarded to the other team.

Throwing equipment is prohibited at all times. An umpire may eject a player for throwing equipment in anger after one (1) caution. If the umpire feels that the behavior of the player is severe, the player can be ejected from the game without a caution.

Player safety and the values of good sportsmanship are to be emphasized above all other considerations. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including off-color language, trash talk, intentional base path collisions, bean balls, and bat or helmet throwing are not to be tolerated by any league representative and may get you ejected without warning by the umpires calling the game.

The umpire officiating begins upon their arrival on the field and ends on their departure. Attempting to discuss any umpire's decisions with them after the game or when they have left the field is prohibited and may result in ejection from the game even though the game has ended. Disciplinary action from the Board will be possible upon review.

## **Official Game**

Weekday games will start at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise indicated. Forfeit time will be 20 minutes after the posted game starting time. Official time is by the head umpire's watch.

If a team has less than 7 players, the game cannot be played and is a forfeit.

When a team cannot conclude a game because an injury provides that team with less than 7 players, the game will be declared a forfeit.

A game will be deemed as an official game if called due to darkness, no matter how many innings have been played.

A game must end on a lighted field at 9:45 p.m.

There is a 2 ½ hour time limit on all Pony games. No new inning can start after 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The home team scorebook will be the "official book". It is suggested that the visitor's scorekeeper meets with the home team scorekeeper between innings to verify the score, batting order, etc. The umpire does not keep score.

## **Equipment**

All players must wear their team's jersey, a baseball hat and baseball pants in order to play. A player cannot play in shorts, without a hat and must have at least sneakers or baseball shoes.

Players are advised to wear groin protection (cup). Catchers must wear protective gear including neck and groin protectors.

Bats shall be no more than a minus five (-5), or minus eight (-8) for 12 and 13 year old players, and the barrel no more than 2 5/8".

The Multi-color pitching glove rule is NOT in effect. Any glove, other than light gray or white may be used.

## **Playing Terms/Conditions**

The home team shall be responsible for paying the umpires and providing at least 2 game balls.

Ground rules are governed by field conditions and must be explained to the umpire prior to the game.

Any member of a team such as a coach, player with batting helmet or manager may coach 1st or 3rd base.

Any member of a team's roster may warm up a pitcher at home plate or in the bullpen. Any player warming up the pitcher must wear a catcher's helmet and mask when in the crouch position.

The Branchburg Umpire in Chief will update the weather hotline (908) 707-1017 by 4:30 p.m. each weekday and by 7:30 a.m. on weekends. If the weather is uncertain, assume there will be a game.

Any games which are rained-out will be rescheduled by the BBC at their convenience. The Umpire-in-chief needs at least a 48 hour lead time for scheduling umpires for a makeup games.

When the umpires arrive at the field, they will decide if the field conditions warrant the game can be safely played.

### **Mercy Rule**

Once a game has reached regulation time, 4 innings (3 ½ if the home team is leading), and a team is leading by 10 or more runs, the game will end. All teams must have an equal number of at bats, unless the home team is leading by 10 runs.

### **Substituting**

All defensive substitutions must be made by the third inning. If a game is completed and not all players have played, then the team that has not played all their players will forfeit the game by a score of 7-0, this does not apply due to mercy rule or darkness.

Each manager must bat all players.

There is free defensive substitution.

If a batter is injured or cannot be replaced when the missing player's at bat comes up, it is not an out. Injured players will just be skipped in the batting order, but that player will not be allowed to return to the game at any time.

If the catcher or pitcher reaches base or is on base with two outs in any inning, he may be substituted for (at coaches discretion) with a pinch runner (the last batted out made in the lineup).

If a team needs to add a player to their team to field enough players, they must first receive approval from the Pony League Commissioner, and all opposing teams will be notified of the change in the roster.

For the sake of fair play, the last batted out may play right field on a team with less than 9 active players.

The BBC Board would like to encourage player rotation. Though it is not a rule of the BBC PONY league, it is the goal of this organization to encourage children to play baseball, learn about teamwork and responsibility, and to allow young men the chance to achieve personal goals. If a child makes the effort to attend practice and train on his own, we strongly suggest he be given the opportunity to play the position during regular season games.

### **Pitching**

Pitchers are allowed to pitch a maximum of ten (10) innings in one week, with a maximum of four (4) innings per day. If a player pitches in another league or on a high school team, those innings pitched will count in the pitcher's weekly total innings pitched.

One pitch thrown in any inning is considered one inning pitched. Any regular or make-up game, once started, will count towards the 10 innings for that pitcher, even if the game is called for any reason. Weeks begin on Sunday and end on Saturday.

Once a pitcher is removed from that position in a game, he may not return to pitch.

The opposing manager will be required to record the pitcher's innings pitched for each game. This information must be available for review throughout the season if asked for by other managers or umpires. The week's scorebook should be available for any manager to review. If a pitcher throws 1 inning over the maximum allowed innings in one week, the result of that game will be a forfeit and ruled as a win to the opposing team.

#### Special Pitching Rules:

#### **16U kids will NOT pitch at all during the season (regular season or playoffs).**

Players on the JV team that are 14 or 15 will not pitch until their high school season is over

Players on the Freshman team will not pitch until their high school season is over

Players that are 15 and do not play high school baseball can pitch as many innings as they would like (4 innings maximum per game).

7th and 8th grade players can pitch as many innings as they would like (regular season and playoffs) - 4 innings maximum per game.

If entering a game in the middle of an inning, it counts as a FULL inning.

Balks will be called. The 1st balk for each pitcher will result in a warning to the pitcher. A 2nd balk will be enforced.

#### **Field Conduct**

Ejections will result in a suspension of at least one game. Depending on the infraction the suspension may be longer and will be at the discretion of the Umpire-in-Chief. This includes players, managers, coaches, parents and fans.

Runners must avoid contact when there will be a tag play at any base. At the discretion of the umpire, a player violating this rule will be called out.

#### **Standings**

For tiebreakers a forfeit score is 7-0.

Games not played will count as a forfeit loss for the purpose of tiebreakers. In other words, if a team did not play a game, then their runs allowed is increased by 7.