

**PONY**  
(Fast Pitch, 13-14 Year Old Girls)  
**BYLAWS**

**1. RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Official Pony Girls Softball Rules and Regulations shall govern league play except where amended by the Youngsville Recreational Sports Programs.

**2. DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

The Youngsville Recreational Sports Programs shall reserve the right to withdraw privileges from any player, umpire or adult volunteer whose conduct, on or off the playing field, reflects in a manner that is detrimental to the best interest of the Youngsville Recreational Sports Programs and the youth of the City of Youngsville. The reputation of PONY in our community can be drastically injured by the actions of one or of a small group of persons, on or off the playing field. A player, parent, manager, coach, umpire and league official all bear the responsibility of upholding the good name of the program. Public quarreling and bickering, whether over playing field situations or league administrative problems, only serve to weaken the entire organization in the community. This is a youth program designed to benefit young people. Much of the benefit they derive from it stems from the example set by the adult leaders. Be sure it is a good example.

It is mandatory if you are thrown out of the game; you must serve a one game suspension. The coach must serve his/her one game suspension away from the ball park. During his/her suspension game the coach cannot be at the ball park which includes: field, dugout, parking lot, stands etc. Any suspended coach violating this rule will be dismissed from the league for the remainder of the current year with a possibility of being barred from future participation in the league, permanently, or for a specific number of years. If a suspended coach is a coach in another league he/she will not be allowed to coach or be at the Youngsville Sports Complex for their other games in the same calendar year, you will be dismissed from the league for the remainder of the current year, with a possibility of being barred from future participation in the league, permanently, or for a specific number of years. All head coaches of an assistant coach or fans are a gross reflection of a head coach's inability to control his team and the head coach will be held responsible. All coaches will be issued an Official Pony League Softball rulebook.

The following will be adopted by the league as a guide for the handling of player or adult discipline problems.

- A. The Director shall have the authority to suspend, discharge or otherwise discipline any player, manager, coach, umpire, league officer or other person whose conduct is in violation of the Rules and Regulations of PONY Softball and/or is considered detrimental to the best interests of the league.
  - (1) Persons subject to such discipline shall have the right to a hearing before the Director before such discipline is imposed.
  - (2) In the event of discipline procedures involving a player, or other person under the age of 18, that person's parents shall be invited to attend the hearing with the person concerned.
- B. Persons, youth or adult, who refuse to comply with the rules of Softball, PONY softball, or the League, may be considered for disciplinary action.
- C. Recognizing the difficulty of establishing specific penalties for a variety of violations of acceptable conduct, the following penalties are suggested. The Director may impose the one which, in his opinion, appears to match the severity of the offense.
  - (1) Warning. The offending person is to be advised, in writing, of the offense, and further advised that repetition of the offense will result in a more severe penalty.
  - (2) Suspension. The offending person is to be advised in writing that he or she has been suspended from all league activity for a specific number of games, or days.
  - (3) Dismissal. The offending person is to be advised in writing that he or she has been dismissed from the league for the remainder of the current year.
  - (4) Barred. The offending person is to be advised in writing that he or she has been barred from present and future participation in the league, permanently, or for a specific number of years.

Any player, coach, or fan having to be ejected from a game for any reason must leave the premises within one minute after being ejected. Failure to leave the premises within one minute after being ejected will result in a forfeiture of the game. Failure to leave the premises will result in the dismissal of the player, coach, or fan for the remainder of the current year, with a possibility of being barred from future participation in the league permanently, or for a specific number of years.

Cursing and undue or continuous baiting of any official is unsportsmanlike conduct and is cause to eject any player, coach, or fan from a game.

### **3. TEAMS (AGE)**

Age, for the league purposes, means “league age,” which is that age attained by a player on January 1 of the season in question.

### **4. SELECTION OF COACHES**

All head coaches will be selected yearly by the director. An assistant coach will not automatically become the head coach the following year. All coaching selections whether head or assistant must be re-appointed and approved each year.

### **5. PLAYING FIELDS**

Distance between bases: 60 feet

Pitching distance: 43 feet

### **6. EQUIPMENT**

A 12’ optic yellow pony stamped softball will be used.

Conventional baseball uniforms required in league AND TOURNAMENT PLAY include a shirt, pants, cap, and socks as used by teams in the Major Leagues, and shall be worn by all players. All players must wear their shirts tucked in the pants. Hats must be worn properly with the beak in the front.

An official bat shall be marked “OFFICIAL SOFTBALL” by the manufacturer. If the words, “OFFICIAL SOFTBALL” cannot be read due to wear and tear on the bat, the bat should be declared legal if it is legal in all other aspects.

Rubber soled or rubber cleated shoes are permitted. Metal spikes are **not** allowed.

The batter, players in the on-deck batting area and baserunners shall be required to wear protective headgear which gives protection to the top of the head, temples, ears and base of the skull. Headgear shall be NOCSAE approved. Any head gear in violation of this rule shall be removed from play.

Catchers are required to wear proper protective equipment including a mask with throat guard, chest protector, shin guards and protective headgear which gives protection to the top of the head when catching behind the plate.

- (1) Any player serving as a catcher to warm up a pitcher shall wear a mask, whether the pitcher is warming up from the mound, in the bullpen or elsewhere.
- (2) It is recommended that managers make every effort to see that athletic supporters are worn by all male players.

No jewelry shall be worn by any player, except for medical identification.

All coaches will sign out equipment at the beginning of the season. All equipment shall be returned immediately after the end of the season, clean and ready for storage.

## **7. PLAYING RULES**

When the base runner fails to keep contact with the base to which she is entitled until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand the base runner will be called out.

Base runners are entitled to advance with liability to be put out on the pitcher's delivery, when the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

When the catcher fails to catch the third strike before the ball touches the ground when there are less than two outs and first base is unoccupied or any time there are two outs. This is called the third strike rule. The ball is in play and the batter becomes a batter-base runner with liability to be put out.

No more than three players shall "huddle" on the playing field at any time during the game. Umpires shall discourage such gatherings when they tend to delay the game.

The batter must keep one foot in the batter's box at all times in order to speed up play.

Free substitution will be allowed in all games. This rule allows starters and substitutes to be withdrawn from the game and reentered as many times as desired without penalty provided that these basic rules are followed:

- A. A player's defensive fielding position may be changed at any time during a game, but **no player may bat in more than one position in the batting lineup**. When a starting player or substitute reenters a game, he must stay in the same position in the batting order that he originally occupied.
- B. A pitcher that is removed from the pitching duties in the game by either the coach or umpire may return to the mound one time. A relief pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return to the mound.

**ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY:** All players present at game time must play two consecutive innings (Minimum), **EXCEPTIONS:** The pitcher may begin the game and may only pitch to one batter and be removed from the game, but must complete the two-innings requirement. If a player is being disciplined, the name of such player must be reported to the umpire, the score keeper and the opposing coach. **PENALTY** for a team not playing all players as required will lose by forfeit if the opposing coach protests within forty-eight hours.

The side will be retired after three outs or when five runs have been scored in one-half inning.

**EXCEPTION:** The last inning a team may score as many runs as they can before three outs (open inning). **In a seven-inning game, only the seventh inning can be considered the open inning.**

#### **REQUIRED NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

A team failing to field at least eight uniformed players within 15 minutes after scheduled starting time of a game, or at any time during the game, shall forfeit the game. If a team starts a game with eight players, the ninth batting position will be declared an out. If the ninth player arrives after the game has started, he will be inserted into the batting order in the ninth batting position. In order for the ninth player to be eligible he has to be on the line up sheet at the start of the game.

If a play is close coaches must instruct their players to slide. If a player does not slide the runner may be called out. Coaches will not instruct players to intentionally run over another player.

A **FOUL TIP** is a batted ball that goes short and directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike, and the ball is in play.

## **BATTING OUT OF TURN:**

- A. A batter shall be called out, on appeal, when she fails to bat in her proper turn, and another batter completes a time at bat in her place.
- B. The proper batter may take her place in the batter's box at any time before the improper batter becomes a runner or is put out, and any balls and strikes shall be counted in the proper batter's time at bat.
- C. When an improper batter becomes a runner, or is put out, and the defensive team appeals to the umpire before the first pitch to the next batter of either team, or before any play or attempted play, the umpire shall:
  - 1. Declare the proper batter out; and
  - 2. Nullify any advance or score made because of a ball batted by the improper batter or because of the improper batters advance to first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batter or otherwise.

NOTE: If a runner advances, while the improper batter is at bat, on a stolen base, balk, wild pitch or passed ball, such advance is legal.

- D. When an improper batter becomes a runner, or is put out, and a pitch is made to the next batter of either team before an appeal is made, the improper batter thereby becomes the proper batter, and the results of his time at bat becomes legal.
- E. When the proper batter is called out because she has failed to bat in turn, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of the proper batter thus called out.
- F. When an improper batter becomes a proper batter because no appeal is made before the next pitch, the next batter shall be the batter whose name follows that of such legalized improper batter. The instant an improper batter's actions are legalized, the batting order picks up with the name following that of the legalized improper batter.

### NOTE:

- 1. The umpire shall not direct the attention of any person to the presence in the batter's box of an improper batter. This rule is designed to require constant vigilance by the players and coaches of both teams.
- 2. The official scorer should notify the coach concerned if an ineligible player or an improper batter is about to be used in the game, but the failure of the scorer to do so has no affect upon the rules.

## 8. PITCHING RULES

Before starting the delivery (pitch), the pitcher shall comply with the following:

- A. She shall take a position with her pivot foot on the pitcher's plate and non-pivot foot on or behind the pitcher's plate. Both feet must be on the ground within the twenty-four-inch length of the pitcher's plate. Her shoulders shall be in line with first and third bases. The hands shall be separated. The ball can be in the glove or pitching hand.
- B. While in the position described in "A" above, she shall take the signal from the catcher.
- C. After completing "B" above, she shall hold the ball in both hands for no less than one second and no more than ten seconds before releasing the ball.
- D. The pitcher shall not be considered in pitching position unless the catcher is in position to receive the pitch.
- E. The pitcher may not take the pitching position on or near the pitcher's plate without having the ball in her possession.
- F. The pitch starts when one hand is taken off the ball or the pitcher makes any motion that is part of the windup after the hands have been brought together.
- G. Once the hands are brought together, the pitcher shall not take more than one step, which must be forward, toward the batter and simultaneous with the delivery of the ball to the batter.
- H. The pivot foot may remain in contact with or may push off and drag away from the pitching plate prior to the front foot touching the ground, as long as the pivot foot remains in contact with the ground. Pushing off with the pivot foot from a place other than the pitcher's plate is illegal.
- I. It is not a step if the pitcher slides her foot across the pitcher's plate, provided contact is maintained with the pitcher's plate.
- J. The pitcher shall not deliberately drop, role or bounce the ball while in the pitching position in order to prevent the batter from striking it.
- K. The pitcher shall not, at any time during a game, be allowed to use tape or any other foreign substances upon the ball, the pitching hand or fingers nor shall any other player apply a foreign substance to the ball.
- L. Under the supervision and control of the umpire, powdered resin may be used to dry the hands. The pitcher shall not wear a sweat band, bracelet or similar type item on the wrist or forearm of the pitching arm.
- M. The pitcher shall not deliver a pitch unless all defensive players, except the catcher who must be in the catcher's box, are positioned in fair territory.
- N. At the beginning of each half inning or when a pitcher relieves another, no more than one minute may be used to deliver no more than five pitches to the catcher.
- O. The pitcher shall not throw to a base during a live ball while her foot is in contact with the pitcher's plate after she has taken the pitcher's position.

- P. There shall be only one charged conference between the coach or other team representative from the dugout with each and every pitcher in an inning. The second charged conference shall result in the removal of the pitcher from the pitching position for the remainder of game.
- Q. If the ball slips from the pitcher's hand during her windup or during the back swing, the ball will be in play and the runners may advance at their own risk.
- R. Any player serving as a catcher to warm up a pitcher shall wear a mask, helmet and throat protector whether the pitcher is warming up from the mound, in the bullpen or elsewhere.

As soon as a pitcher delivers one pitch to a batter the pitcher shall be considered as having pitched in one inning.

If a relief pitcher comes in "cold" the umpire shall allow the pitcher to warm up properly with at least ten warm-up pitches.

The pitcher named in the batting order turned in prior to the start of the game shall 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-in-chief, incapacitates her from pitching.

## **9. LENGTH OF GAMES**

**TIME LIMIT:** We will play seven innings with a ten-run rule after five innings. No new inning may be started under five minutes of the one hour and thirty-minute time limit. Any innings started before time limit must be finished before game is called off. (A new inning starts as soon as the current innings ends, this will prevent unnecessary delays by a team attempting to end a game prematurely).

**5 MINUTE RULE:** Any game delayed for more than 5 minutes due to player injury, field equipment problems, or other unusual problems, shall have time limit extended by the amount of time delay which exceeded 5 minutes. (Example: If a dislodged base takes 14 minutes to repair, the  $14-5=9$  minutes would be added to the game time limit.

Fast Pitch League games shall be seven innings in duration. When a game is tied at the end of regulation length, extra innings may be played until time limit expires. If after time limit the game is still a tie it shall remain a tie.

**COMPLETE GAME:** If a game is called for any reason, it shall be a complete game if four innings have been completed, or if the home team has scored more runs in three innings or three and a fraction innings, than the visiting team has scored in four completed innings.

10 RUN RULE: If a team is leading an opponent by at least 10 runs after five or more complete innings have been played or after four and one half innings if the home team should have a 10-run lead at the end of its third inning, or before the completion of its fifth inning, the game shall be terminated and the team in the lead shall be declared the winner.

## 10. SCHEDULE

Scheduling and rescheduling of games shall be the responsibility of the league director.

MAKE-UP GAMES: Every attempt will be made to make-up all scheduled games

## 11. UMPIRES

Assignment of umpires shall be the responsibility of the league. At any time, the umpires assigned by the league fail to report, or are otherwise unavailable, any other umpires used in that game shall be agreed upon by the opposing managers, preferably in writing.

The use of tobacco in any form by umpires, coaches or players on the field is prohibited.

## 12. SCOREKEEPERS

SCORE KEEPING: The home team must provide the score keeper, however, each team should keep their own score for personal records.

The official scorer **should** notify the coach concerned if an ineligible player or an improper batter is about to be used in the game, but the failure of the scorer to do so has no affect upon the rules.

## 13. MANAGERS AND COACHES

A coach wishing to consult with an umpire shall request time out and approach the umpire in a gentlemanly manner. If this procedure is followed the umpire is required to answer all questions. Managers have a one-minute period in which to discuss a rule interpretation.

Ball and strikes are **not** to be discussed.

Umpires have been instructed to keep the game moving. Players should be hustling at all times on and off the field and avoid delaying tactics.

Each team will pick up trash on their side of the field after each game.

Teams and coaches are **required** to congratulate each other on the field after each game.

Adult coaches only may be used in either or both the first and third base coaching boxes. Only players in baseball uniforms shall be used as base coaches when adult coaches are not used.

A coach or coaches shall not switch coaching boxes during an inning.

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 shall be made. The only exceptions to this rule shall be in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire.

Umpires shall not permit more than one offensive time out in each inning to allow a manager or coach to talk with a batter.

The use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs in any form by players or adult leaders in the dugout, on the benches or on the playing field shall not be permitted.

#### **14. PENALTIES**

Pitchers in violation of any of the pitching rules shall be considered ineligible players, subject to the penalties stated for use of an ineligible player in this rule.

Penalty for use of illegal players shall be forfeiture of games in which illegal players participated, provided such games are protested by any of the league coaches or league presidents in writing within forty-eight hours of the game or games in question.

#### **15. PROTESTS**

All umpire decisions and judgements will be final and no protest will be allowed. All games will be final.

## **16. GENERAL CONDUCT**

The umpire will grade the coach's conduct during a game and turn in his comments to the Youngsville Sports Complex and kept on file by the Director.

## **17. ALL-STARS**

### **SELECTION OF TEAMS:**

The all-star team shall be composed of a head coach, an assistant coach, and a business manager with a minimum of 12 players. Area high school baseball coaches will conduct the All-Star tryouts independently and provide YSC with recommendations as to who should be named to the All-Star teams. League coaches will not be involved in the independent tryouts.

League coaches will complete a ballot that will include their recommended All-Star teams in their league. League coach's ballots will help provide support for players who are not able to attend the tryouts or may have a bad day at the tryouts. League coach's ballots and independent tryout ballots will be compiled by YSC, and final All-Star teams will be selected by YSC.

### **SELECTION OF COACH:**

The procedure for selecting the all-star team head coach shall be as follows:

To be eligible for selection as a head coach in the Youngsville Recreational Sports Programs, a candidate will be chosen by the Youngsville Sports Complex based on the following considerations:

1. Coaches code of conduct
2. Baseball knowledge
3. Coaching ability
4. League standing

## **18. EJECTION RULE:**

Any coach ejected for **any** reason during the League Season will **not** be eligible to coach the All-Star Team.

## **19. COACHES, JUST LET THE KIDS PLAY:**

When you organize a youth sports program, when you sign up your child, or when you watch him or her at practices or at games, continually ask yourself a question: Is this program, practice or game primarily serving the needs of the children in this age group-all the children-or is it primarily serving the needs of the coaches? Your answer to that question will guide you toward making good choices in the best interest of our children.

If winning is not the children's top priority-and they have told us time and again that it is not-then making choices about which children play and which children do not play based on how best to win the most games does not serve primarily the children's wants. It serves primarily the coaches wants.

Kids want to have fun-that is their top priority. If all the drills, all the yelling and screaming from the sidelines and the pressure-packed schedules ruin the fun, the coaches have missed the mark.

Kids want to play. They don't want to sit and watch other kids play or watch adults coach. If you are making choices that keep kids on the bench, you are making choices that do not serve the wants, the needs and the rights of all the children, rather than just a select few.

Kids deserve the chance to succeed. If you are intent on identifying "talent" at an early age, selecting elite teams and discouraging those who are cut, you are damaging what is every child's right to have a chance to succeed. You are doing it for no good reason because until children are more fully developed, their "talent" should not be and cannot be accurately evaluated.

Kids learn best by doing, not just by listening, and they learn by being spontaneous, creative and by taking chances. Thus, practices and games do not serve children's needs if they discourage those natural instincts and create fears about making mistakes.

Kids need time to relax, time for their bodies to recharge, time for their minds to wander. Kids need to daydream now and then. They need a day off. If their youth sports schedules overexert their bodies, overtax their energies and rob them of their free time, those schedules are not meeting children's needs. You see the point. You see the pattern. So much of what adults create in the name of youth sports violate the very nature of being a child, the natural wants and need of children.

So please coaches adhere to the Youngsville Recreational Sports Programs philosophy:

**JUST LET THE KIDS PLAY!**