

Bronco Division game play is conducted according to the rules of Major League Baseball, National PONY Baseball, and supplemental rules specific to the Seattle PONY Baseball League (SPBL).

In order of precedence, the rules shall be applied as follows:

1. SPBL Bronco Division Supplemental Rules
2. National PONY Baseball Rules
3. Major League Baseball Rules.

*Inquiries regarding any of these rules may be directed to rules@spbpony.org.*

## **Seattle PONY Baseball Bronco Division Supplemental Rules**

### **1. Sportsmanship**

Players, coaches, parents and spectators shall practice good sportsmanship at all times. Respect shall be shown towards umpires, coaches, parents, spectators, and players. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their players and their supporters. Complaints shall be referred to the Commissioner of the Bronco Division for resolution.

### **2. Safety**

#### **A. Uniforms and Equipment**

Players shall wear league-issued jerseys, socks, and caps. Each player provides his or her own baseball pants. No player shall take the field without a complete uniform.

Metal cleats are not allowed.

#### **B. Bats**

Bat diameter is limited to a maximum of 2.75 inches. "Big Barrel" bats are allowed.

#### **C. Dugouts**

*i.* The third-base dugout is assigned to the home team during the regular season. During the season-ending tournament the higher seeded team is the home team and gets first choice of dugouts. In the final game of the tournament if an undefeated team opposes a team with a defeat, the undefeated team is the home team and takes first choice of dugouts.

*ii.* Players shall remain in their respective dugouts when they are not batting or playing in the field. Equipment shall remain in the dugout when not in use. Players in the dugout shall not hold bats in their hands. Climbing of chain link fences is strictly prohibited.

*iii.* Players may take positions outside the dugout when they are not batting or playing in the field under the following conditions:

- On-deck batters may take practice swings near the fence and away from other players and coaches. On-deck batters must wear league-approved batting helmets. On-deck batters shall be positioned on the third-base side when the current batter is right-handed and on the first-base side when the current batter is left-handed.
- Relief pitchers may warm up with a catcher in outfield foul territory, with pitches thrown parallel to the foul line. A coach shall be positioned to protect the pitcher and catcher from foul balls.
- When a dugout is not habitable because of residual water, players may sit or stand as a group, at the option of the head coach, on the grandstands or tightly against the fence behind the dugout.
- Players may use training devices (e.g., batting tee with catch net or "SwingAway") in an area out of the field of play, provided there is appropriate adult supervision, and that the safety of all other players, coaches, umpires, and spectators is not compromised in any way.

*iv.* Other than players and officially designated coaches, no person may be in the dugout or on the field of play during a game except in case of a medical emergency.

#### **D. Thrown Equipment**

*i.* Upon the first occurrence of a thrown bat during the game, the umpire shall issue a warning to the batter and indicate to the keeper of the official scorebook that the player has been warned. On the second occurrence, the player is immediately called out, whether or not the action was intentional. On the third thrown-bat infraction, intentional or not, the player is immediately called out and ejected from the game. Each thrown-bat infraction is a judgment call by the umpire.

*ii.* Any player throwing in anger or frustration a helmet, bat, or any other league equipment, may be ejected from the game. The head coach of the offending player may, with umpire approval, remove the player from the game (such removal shall be considered reasonable discipline for purposes of Rule 5.B), or the umpire may determine that ejection is required. In addition, if replacement of equipment is required as a result of such an incident, a \$35 replacement fee will be levied against the head coach of the offending player.

#### **E. Batters and Baserunners on Field of Play**

All players on the batting team who are out of the dugout at any time must wear league-approved batting helmets. This includes the current batter, all baserunners, players waiting their turn at bat, and players used as base coaches.

#### **F. Illegal Players on Field of Play**

Other than the current batter, the on-deck batter, any baserunners, or players coaching bases, no player on the batting team may enter the playing field while the ball is live. If the on-deck batter or other player interferes with a play, the runner closest to home plate will be called out.

#### **G. Injuries/First Aid**

Coaches are responsible for maintaining their league-issued first-aid kit and making sure it is present at all practices and games. At least one coach from each team must attend the league-sponsored preseason first-aid clinic. In the case of head and neck injuries, do not move the victim without permission of trained medical personnel. Use the league-established system to report all injuries to the Bronco Commissioner on the day of the injury.

#### **H. Head-First Slides**

Head-first slides are not allowed when the runner is attempting to gain a base. An infraction results in the runner being called out. Runners may return to a base already gained with a head-first dive or slide, and may dive head-first back to a base on a pick-off attempt.

#### **I. Slide Or Avoid**

In any play at a base, except first base, the runner must slide, veer, or otherwise make reasonable effort to avoid contact with the fielder(s) attempting to make the play. A runner who does not make a reasonable effort to avoid contact will be called out. This is a judgment call by the umpire. If a player, or players on a team break this rule repeatedly, the umpire may issue warnings and/or ejections to players and/or coaches.

#### **J. Base Coaches**

At the commencement of each game, the head coach of each team will designate up to two additional persons to act as official coaches for the game. No other persons will be allowed in the dugout or to coach the base paths, except that players may coach the base paths if they are wearing a league-approved batting helmet.

### **3. Umpiring**

#### **A. Umpires**

The league shall assign one professional umpire to officiate each Bronco Division game. Rule 3.D (Non-Professional Umpires) describes the proper procedure in the event that a league-designated umpire is not available.

## **B. Pre-Game Conference**

Before the game, the umpire and head coaches shall meet to review rules, time limits as applicable, and the extent of the strike zone.

## **C. Judgment Calls Final**

Judgment calls by umpires shall be final and may not be contested. This includes but is not restricted to ball/strike calls and safe/out decisions. If a question arises in relation to the rules, the head coach of a team may respectfully request a clarification. Argumentative behavior is not allowed. The head coach is allowed on the field with the umpire's permission. No other coach, parent, player or spectator may approach the umpire to discuss a decision in any way. Spectators, coaches, and players shall not stand behind the backstop or position themselves in any other way with the purpose of reviewing and/or challenging umpires' decisions. Spectators must move to a different position upon request of the umpire.

## **D. Non-Professional Umpires**

In the event that the league-designated umpire does not appear at a scheduled game, or is otherwise unavailable, the game shall be officiated by umpires designated by the coaches of the teams playing. These umpires may be assistant coaches, parents, or other spectators. The game shall be officiated by two umpires. The home team shall provide the chief umpire to call balls and strikes, and generally preside over the game. The chief umpire may be positioned behind the pitcher's mound if suitable protective equipment is not available or if the umpire is otherwise uncomfortable in the customary position behind the plate. The visiting team shall provide a field umpire to assist in calling plays on the base paths. No other individuals shall make umpiring decisions in relation to the game. If an umpire must leave the game, both head coaches shall be notified and a new umpire designated.

## **4. Game Duration**

### **A. Field Time**

Fields are available for 3 hours for each game. This time is divided into 2 segments: 30 minutes for warm-up and 2.5 hours for the game. Beginning one half-hour before the published game time, the visiting team shall be allowed 10 minutes on the field for pre-game fielding practice. The home team shall follow with 10 minutes of pre-game practice.

### **B. Regular Season Game Time and Length**

*i. Regulation game*--A regulation game consists of 7 complete innings.

*ii. Official Game Time*-- The official time of a game shall be measured as the time from (a) the published game starting time or (b) the time of the first pitch if no league-designated umpire was available and prepared to begin the game at the published game starting time. Official game time is kept by the scorekeeper for the home team.

*iii. Time Limit*-- For regular season games played on weekday evenings, if the official game time at the completion of 4 innings exceeds 100 minutes, the official length of the game shall be decreased to 6 innings, with the 6th inning becoming the final inning for purposes of Rule 6.A (Five-Run Limit). Regular season games played on Saturdays are to be played to 7-inning completion.

Once the official length of the game is set to 6 innings, it shall not be reset to 7 innings, regardless of how long it takes to play the 5th and 6th innings. Rule 5.A remains in effect in games shortened to 6 innings.

*iv. Tie score*--During the regular season, in the event the game is tied after the completion of seven (7) innings (or in the case of weeknight games that are modified to six (6) innings by Rule 4.B.iii), no extra innings are played and the official result of the game is a tie.

*v. No negotiating*—All provisions of Rule 4.B shall be followed for all regular season games, without exception. No umpire or coach discretion is allowed.

### **C. Expediting the Flow of the Game**

Games should be played through 7-inning completion as often as possible. Coaches shall endeavor to expedite the flow of the game in general so that 7 innings may be completed in the available time. Recommended measures to expedite the game include:

- A coach or player should warm up the pitcher while the catcher is preparing for the inning. If a player warms up a pitcher, he or she must wear protective gear as required in Rule 5.F.
- Coaches should inform their players of the upcoming inning's rotation and field assignments prior to the end of their batting half of the inning.
- When there are 2 outs, the player who is to play catcher in the next half-inning should wear leg guards, including when he or she is the on-deck batter. If the player is on base with 2 outs, he or she may be replaced with a pinch-runner in order to begin putting on catching gear. In this case, the pinch-runner shall be the player who was most recently retired as a batter or baserunner.

## **5. Positions and Rotation**

### **A. Position Rotation**

Every team member present shall play a minimum of three innings in the field in the course of game.

### **B. Honor System**

It is the responsibility of the head coach to insure that the team's positional assignments adhere to Rule 5.A. Each team shall keep track of its own assignments. Coaches shall honor each other coach's commitment to this rule without question.

### **C. Pitching**

*i.* During the regular season a pitcher may not throw in more than 3 innings in a single game. For the purposes of this rule, throwing a single pitch in an inning counts pitching in one inning.

*ii.* During the division tournament, pitchers may pitch a maximum of three innings in a game. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of three innings in each separate game of a doubleheader (up to six total). Pitchers must observe the 40-hour rest rule after pitching in four or more innings in a day. For the purposes of this rule, time is counted between the official game starting times. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 12 innings in a seven-day period. The week shall commence on the first day of the tournament. Players shall be renewed on the first day of the subsequent seven-day period but must also follow the 40-hour rest provision. For the purposes of this rule, time is counted between the official game starting times.

### **D. Catching**

Catchers are required to wear league-approved protective gear in games: mask and helmet, leg guards, and chest protector. Any player receiving warm-up pitches shall wear, at a minimum, a mask and helmet. Male catchers must wear a rigid protective cup at all times that they are playing or warming up pitchers.

### **E. Batting Order**

All players present and able at a game shall be included in the batting order and shall bat when their turn comes, whether or not they are currently assigned a fielding position.

## **6. Additional Rules**

### **A. Five-Run Limit**

Except for the final inning, a team is limited to scoring 5 runs per inning. Scoring is unlimited for both teams in the final inning.

### **B. Field of Play**

By definition, the field of play includes all fair territory plus foul territory between the foul line and the infield fence and the continuation of the infield fence line (imagined if necessary) to the outfield fence, or to infinity if there is no outfield fence. The boundaries of the field of play should be reviewed at the Pre-Game Conference before each game.

A batter will not be called out if a fielder goes out of the field of play to catch a fly ball. When a batted ball that was originally fair bounces or rolls out of play, or if a fielder carries the ball out of play, the ball is declared dead at the time it goes out of play and the runners are awarded the next base beyond the one

to which they were advancing at time the ball was declared dead. The umpire's judgment is final in the award of bases.

### **C. Overthrows**

When a thrown ball leaves the field of play, each base runner shall be awarded one base in addition to the base to which he or she was advancing at the time the ball was thrown, unless that is impossible because of the status of the runner(s) ahead of him or her. If the ball is thrown out of play on a pick off attempt, the base runner shall be awarded the additional base, even if he or she was returning to the base they had already gained when the ball was thrown. When the ball is overthrown but remains in the field of play, the ball is live and the runners may advance any number of bases at their own risk.

### **D. Field Coaching**

Coaches for the batting team may coach and/or instruct their players only from the dugout or from the first- and third-base coaching boxes. Exception: a coach may instruct a relief pitcher warming up in outfield foul territory or out of play (See Rule 1.C). Coaches for the defensive team may coach and/or instruct players only from inside the dugout, or in foul territory with their backs against the fence of their own dugout.

### **E. Balls**

The home team is responsible for providing two new regulation baseballs for each game. Balls shall be given to the chief umpire at or before the Pre-Game Conference.

### **F. Scorekeeping and Timekeeping**

The home team is responsible for appointing a keeper of the official scorebook. The official scorekeeper is an official of the game, expected to assist the umpire(s), including by serving as a back-up when ball-strike counts are questioned, by noting thrown-bat warnings, and by serving as the official time keeper (noting official game starting time according to Rule 4.B).

### **G. Portable Outfield Fences**

If a batted ball rolls under the outfield fence, bounces between gaps in the outfield fence, or bounces over the outfield fence, the batter shall be awarded an automatic double. Base runners shall be awarded two bases from the base they stood at the beginning of the play.

Batted balls that bounce off the fences and then out of the field of play shall be called per Rule 6.B. Thrown balls that bounce off the fences and then out of the field of play shall be called per Rule 6.C.

### **H. 10-Run "Mercy" Rule**

*i.* During the regular season, if one team leads the other by 10 or more runs at the completion of the 5th or 6th inning, or if the home team leads by 10 or more runs after the completion of the top half of the 5th inning, the head coach of the trailing team shall decide whether the game is to continue.

*ii.* During the season-ending tournament, if one team leads the other by 10 or more runs at the completion of the 5th or 6th inning, or if the home team leads by 10 or more runs after the completion of the top half of the 5th inning, the game shall end immediately.

### **I. Number of players**

Teams may play games with any number of players. Players who arrive after a game has started may enter the game. Late-arriving players shall enter the batting lineup following the last previously occupied position (that is, if 10 players are in the batting lineup at the time a player arrives, the player shall be inserted in the 11th spot). A player may leave a game and then return in order to attend a required school or religious function. Upon returning to the game the player shall return to the same position in the batting order that he or she originally occupied. The requirement for all players to play at least three innings in the field is not waived if a player leaves and returns, unless a player is present for fewer than three innings.

During the season ending tournament, a team beginning a game with fewer than 10 players shall record an out while at bat as follows:

- Playing with 9 players, every other inning begins with an out being recorded.
- Playing with 8 or fewer players, every inning begins with an out being recorded.

If a team is playing with 8 players and a player arrives, in the second inning or later, no out is recorded in the following inning, but instead in the inning following the following inning. If a player arrives during a team's at bat, the out being recorded stays on the books.