

Pony League Rules

(Updated March 2004)

The Pony League is the highest level of play in the Brookline Youth Baseball program and is geared to 13, 14 and 15 years olds (grades 7, 8 and 9).

Only players who are at least 13 years old and no older than 15 by September 1 of the calendar year they are playing in are eligible to play at the Pony League level of Brookline Youth Baseball. Any 15 year old **NOT** playing in the Brookline High School baseball program is allowed to play in the Pony League.

RULES OF PLAY: The Pony League follows the guidelines set forth by Major League Baseball (American League) except where noted below.

PLAYER SELECTION: The Pony League vice president will assign players to teams, with any help necessary from the league's coaches and other vice presidents within the BYB structure.

COACHES: Coaches are allowed to choose two assistant coaches and a scorekeeper. Only designated coaches and their assistants will be allowed on the bench with the team. Only designated coaches are allowed on the field to instruct players. Only designated **HEAD** coaches are allowed on the field to discuss a play with an umpire. Only designated coaches and team members are allowed to coach from the first- and third-base coaching boxes. All other spectators must watch the game in the designated areas for spectators.

LEAGUE FORMAT: The vice president of the Pony League is responsible for determining the number of teams in the league based upon registration numbers. Teams will play between two and three games per week and coaches can schedule practices as they see fit. Scores and standings are calculated and the season culminates in playoffs. The league vice president, after consulting other Brookline Youth Baseball Board of Directors members, will determine the playoff format for his/her league.

There are **NO** consistent days for practices/games for each team at the Pony level. Games/practices will be held beginning at 5:30 p.m. weekdays and at various times throughout the weekend.

BATS: The Pony League is strictly a wooden bat league. No aluminum bats are allowed at this level. Bats cannot exceed 2 ½ inches in diameter at the thickest part and not more than 42 inches in length.

BALLS: Regulation hard balls are used in all games and practices at the Pony level. The home team is responsible for providing new baseballs for each game.

HELMETS: All players **MUST** wear a batting helmet when hitting or when choosing a bat as they prepare to hit. No players should be holding a bat without wearing a helmet. All base runners must wear helmets at all times. All players who are not hitting should remain on the bench at all times, unless warming up for pitching duties away from the bench area, down the foul line, in foul territory adjacent to the outfield nearest their bench.

QUESTIONS: Any questions or concerns regarding the Pony League program can be directed to the league's vice president. Any questions or concerns about umpiring should be directed to the BYB vice president in charge of Majors and Pony League umpires.

UMPIRES: The league will provide umpires for games, when possible. All coaches, parents and players must adhere to the calls of the umpires without argument.

If an umpire is not available to officiate a game, the home team should select a responsible, unbiased adult to umpire the game.

Umpires will be paid at the conclusion of each game (including playoff games) by the home team's head coach. Brookline Youth Baseball will reimburse all coaches for umpiring payments, but coaches should be prepared to pay the umpires even if they have yet to receive the payment money from BYB.

Any umpire who has **NOT** been notified of a game cancellation 3 hours in advance, and who shows up at the field to umpire a game, should be paid at the field regardless of whether the game is played or not. If at all possible, notify the BYB VP in charge of umpiring of a game cancellation at least three hours prior to the scheduled starting time of the game.

Umpires and the two respective head coaches should meet at home plate before the game starts to review ground rules and Pony League Rules peculiar to Brookline Youth Baseball, as stated in this document (e.g. substitutions, stealing, balks, sliding, innings, darkness, weather).

CANCELLED GAMES: The head coaches for the home team and visiting team should consult with each other in advance of the scheduled start time and try to reach a joint decision as to whether a game should be cancelled due to inclement weather or poor field conditions.

If the opposing head coaches cannot agree 3 hours or more in advance of the game's start time, the home team head coach should call the BYB VP in charge of umpires so that the umpire can be notified in advance.

If the opposing head coaches do not agree in advance of the start time regarding weather or field conditions, then the opinion of the home team coach takes precedence up until the start of the game.

If the home team head coach decides to cancel the game prior to the starting time due to weather or playing conditions and leaves a voice message with both the visiting team head coach and the Pony League vice president, then the game will not be considered a forfeit if the visiting team does not receive the message prior to arriving at the field. Conversely, if the home team head coach decides to cancel a game prior to the starting time and does not leave a voice message with the opposing visiting team's head coach and the Pony League vice president prior to game time, then the game will be considered a forfeit in favor of the visiting team.

Once the game is started, it is the sole authority of the umpire to determine whether conditions allow the game to continue. The umpire may end (call) the game due to poor weather conditions, poor field conditions or darkness whether or not the coaches agree with him/her. The Pony League vice president may also decide to cancel a game, and should notify the two head coaches in such instances.

OFFICIAL GAMES AND TIE GAMES: A game is considered official if two and a half innings have been completed and the home team is winning, or three full innings otherwise.

A game that has become an official game should continue while weather conditions, darkness and time limitations permit until six and a half or seven innings are completed, assuming that either the home team or visiting team has a lead at that point in the game.

A game that is tied after seven innings can continue into extra innings in order to determine a winner if weather conditions, darkness and time limitations permit. A game that has become official and is tied when play is stopped due to weather conditions, darkness or time limitations does not have to be resumed at a later time to determine a winner. Tied games are allowed.

DARKNESS: No inning shall start if it is expected that darkness will prevent its completion. The umpire and head coaches should consult jointly regarding the matter before starting new innings at dusk. In early May, it is advisable to not begin a new inning after 7:30 p.m.. In early June, this deadline can be extended to 7:50 p.m.

The umpire has the sole authority to let a game continue or to call it due to darkness. If a game has to be stopped in the middle of an inning, the game will revert to the last completed inning. If the game was official at the end of the last completed inning, then the score of the game at the end of that last completed inning is final.

PARTIAL GAMES: If a game is stopped due to weather conditions or darkness prior to becoming an official game, it will be considered a partial game. The completion of a partial game should be scheduled at a later time.

RESUMED GAMES: Any completed at-bats and partial half innings should not be replayed when a partial game is resumed at a later date. A partial game should be resumed at the last point where an at-bat was completed, with the same number of outs

and with runners in the same positions as they were when the partial game was stopped, and with the same batting order.

All players that were in the partial game when it was stopped should be in the game when it is resumed, provided they are at the field. Any players who are unavailable to take their positions in the field in the resumed game, that they held in the partial game, can be substituted for by players on the bench, including those players on the bench who were previously removed from the partial game when it was originally played. However, a pitcher who had been removed from the partial game before it was stopped cannot be substituted into the resumed game as a pitcher.

A player who was removed from the original partial game and who is not needed to substitute for a missing player at the resumption of play, is subject to the re-entry rules during the resumed game in the same manner as if the original partial game and the resumed game were part of continuous game play without interruption.

After a partial game is resumed, it should be continued for as long as necessary in order for it to become an official game. The resumed game does not have to go a full seven innings.

RESCHEDULING: The choice of a date, time and location to reschedule a game is the responsibility of the two opposing coaches. It also is the responsibility of the home team coach to notify and receive approval from the Pony league vice president regarding all rescheduled games. The Pony League vice president will arrange for an umpire for the rescheduled game.

MERCY RULE: An inning will end whenever the hitting team scores 10 runs or the fielding team makes three outs, whichever occurs first. The 10-run rule, however, does not apply during the final inning of play. The mercy rule is **NOT** invoked after a team bats around the order. It is invoked only after 10 runs have been scored.

REPORTING GAME RESULTS: It is the responsibility of the winning head coach to report the results of an official or a partial game to the league vice president within 24 hours of the game. Results reported should include: number of innings, score, pitchers used by both teams and innings pitched by each pitcher. If the game results in a tie, it is the responsibility of the home team's head coach to report the results.

Coaches also should report any inappropriate behavior by coaches, parents or players when reporting their scores. Each team is required to keep score and coaches/scorekeepers should meet after each half inning to be sure they agree on the score and notify each other of lineup changes and all substitutions.

PLAYING TIME REQUIREMENTS: Subject to the time constraints and rules of re-entry below, it should be the goal of every coach that every available player play three defensive innings and have one at-bat in every game. A coach **SHOULD** set up a rotation to ensure that all players on his/her team get an opportunity to play complete games over the course of the season.

EXTRA HITTER: A team may start a game with a maximum of 10 players in the batting order and all 10 hitters are considered to be in the game for offensive purposes at all times. If a team starts a game with 10 hitters, it must complete the game with 10 hitters, unless one of the 10 hitters sustains an injury and must be removed from the game and there are no substitutes left on the bench. If a team starts a game with nine hitters, it must complete the game with nine hitters, unless again one of the nine hitters sustains an injury or must be removed from the game and there are no substitutions left on the bench.

All 10 hitters must be included in the lineup that is exchanged by the head coaches at the beginning of the game.

If 10 hitters are used in the batting order for a team, then no more than nine of those players (including the designated defensive player when a designated hitter is being used) may take the field at any one time. The defensive player who is in the game but does not take the field is called the extra defensive player. At any time, the extra defensive player may be exchanged with another player who is on the field. The player who comes off the field, and who remains in the batting order, then becomes the extra defensive player at that time. Such defensive switches do not change the batting order in any way.

DESIGNATED HITTER: A designated hitter is a hitter who is in the current batting order and who always bats for one (only) other player who is also currently in the game for defensive purposes. A designated hitter is not eligible to play a defensive position while he/she is a designated hitter. Similarly, the defensive player for whom a designated hitter bats is called the designated defensive player and is not eligible to hit while the designated hitter is in the game. A designated hitter may hit for a player playing any defensive position, not just the pitcher.

During the course of a game, a substitution may be made for a designated hitter in the batting order without affecting the defensive player for whom the designated hitter bats. Likewise, a substitution may be made for the defensive player for whom the designated hitter bats without needing to substitute for the designated hitter in the batting order.

A team may not relinquish use of a designated hitter during the course of a game by substituting the designated hitter for the designated defensive player unless the designated defensive player must be removed from the game and there are no other substitutes available on the bench. If the latter situation is the case, then the designated defensive player is then permanently removed from the game. The designated hitter continues to hit in the same spot in the batting order and is no longer called a designated hitter because he/she is hitting for himself/herself. If a team started a game with both a maximum of 10 hitters and a designated hitter, and substitutes the designated hitter for the designated defensive player, then the player who was the designated hitter is now eligible to play in the field or to be the extra defensive player.

The lineup that is submitted by a team's head coach to the opposing coach at the beginning of a game should first list the batting order, including the designated hitter if one is used. A designated hitter must be one of the maximum 10 hitters that are allowed in the batting order. The batting order in the lineup that is submitted should be followed by the name of the player for whom the designated hitter is batting, if a designated hitter is used.

PITCHING: Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 10 innings each week. Also, a pitcher only may pitch a maximum of seven innings in any one calendar day, or a total of seven innings over two consecutive days. The pitching week runs from Monday through Sunday.

If a pitcher pitches four or more innings, he/she must have two calendar days of rest before pitching again. If a player pitches three innings or less in a game no days of rest are required before pitching in another game. However, coaches are encouraged not to overuse any pitcher.

Throwing one pitch in an inning constitutes pitching an entire inning.

A starting pitcher removed from pitching may pitch again in the game as long as he/she has not been removed from the game. If he/she is removed from the game or if the coach makes two trips to the mound in the same inning to the same pitcher, then the pitcher cannot pitch again in the game. Any pitcher other than the starter in the game cannot return to the mound in the same game once he/she is removed from the mound regardless of whether that pitcher assumes a field position or is removed from the game.

All innings pitched count in the application of these pitching rules regardless of whether the innings played in a single outing result in an official game.

Two warnings in a single game will be allowed for each pitcher before a balk is called during a regular season game. However, during the playoffs, no warnings will be given for balks.

At the discretion of the Pony League vice president, any violation of the pitching rules may result in the automatic forfeit of a game in which the rule violation occurred.

TRIPS TO THE MOUND: The second trip to the mound to the same pitcher in the same inning will automatically result in removal of that pitcher from the game as a pitcher.

The coach is prohibited from making a second visit to the mound while the same batter is at bat. However, if a pinch hitter is substituted for this batter, the coach may make a second visit to the mound, but must remove the pitcher.

A “trip” is defined as any time an umpire calls time out so that a coach may confer with the pitcher either at the mound or along the foul line, and any time an umpire calls time out so that a coach may confer with any player who subsequently confers with the pitcher before the pitcher delivers another pitch.

A coach is considered to have concluded the visit to the mound when he/she leaves the 18-foot circle surrounding the pitcher’s rubber.

RE-ENTRY: Any of the original starting players (including the 10th player and designated hitter) may be removed and then re-enter the game one time, provided that such player occupies the same position in the batting order whenever he/she is in the game and provided that his/her substitute has gotten one at-bat in the game and that three defensive outs have been recorded by the team while the substitute was in the game. A substitute who is removed from the game after being put into the game cannot re-enter the game.

A substitute may replace a substitute, provided the first substitute has gotten at least one at-bat in the game and that three defensive outs have been recorded by the team while

the first substitute was in the game. A starting player may still re-enter for the second substitute, after the second substitute also has had one at-bat and three defensive outs.

A starting player removed from the game twice cannot re-enter a second time.

If a player re-enters a game illegally as a pitcher, fielder or runner, there is no penalty except that he/she must be removed from the game immediately when discovered. If he re-enters illegally as a batter, such illegal re-entry is penalized according to official Baseball Rules (6.07 Batting Out of Order).

INSUFFICIENT PLAYERS: Each team must have a minimum of eight players take the field in order for an official game to be played. No forfeit will occur unless a team has less than 8 players.

If a team has eight or less players at the field prior to a scheduled game (team A) and the opposing team (team B) has 10 or more players at the field, team B is obligated to offer team A as many players as they can to play for team A in order for team A to field a minimum of eight players as long as team B still has a minimum of nine players remaining to play. If team A chooses not to use the players offered by team B and still has eight players of its own, then it must play with eight players or forfeit the game. The coach of team A is allowed to place the players offered by team B anywhere in the field and anywhere in the batting order.

The designation of players offered to team A by team B will apply to the subject game only. Although such designation of players may occur again for a subsequent scheduled game against another or the same team, coaches are encouraged to vary the choice of players so designated from one game to another if possible so that designated players do not lose their identity with their original team.

Players from Brookline Youth Baseball's Major A League teams are not permitted to play for a Pony League team because of a shortage of Pony League players unless there is approval by the Pony League vice president and the Major A League vice president.

SLIDING: A runner will be called out when he/she does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder at any base when either the fielder has the ball and is waiting to make a tag, or the throw is on its way (umpire's judgment controls) and the fielder is about to catch the ball for the purpose of making the tag. In any case, contact must be made for this rule to apply.

PINCH RUNNING: If a catcher reaches base with two outs in an inning, a pinch runner may be used in order that the catcher may come off the field and begin putting on the catcher's equipment for a timely start of the next half inning if a next half inning is expected to be played. The pinch runner used should be a player who is on the bench and not already in the batting order. The pinch running activity will not otherwise limit the eligibility of the pinch runner for substitution per the re-entry rules above.