

Pony Rules, 2024
DANNY SMITH MEMORIAL PARK CORPORATION
PONY LEAGUE BASEBALL RULES

1. Field Preparation & Equipment

- a. Bases shall be set 60' apart.
- b. The home team is responsible for preparing the field for play before each game. This includes lining the field and placing bases. If it is the last game of the day, the home team shall be responsible for storing field equipment, turning off lights and locking equipment buildings.
- c. The visiting team is responsible for connecting and running the scoreboard and, if it is the last game of the day, returning scoreboard equipment to the shed. A parent makes an ideal candidate for this task.
- d. Each team is responsible for removing their own equipment, trash etc. from the field and dugouts. Teams should attempt to vacate the field and dugouts promptly to allow teams in subsequent games to take the field and warm up.
- e. A hard baseball, supplied by the league, will be used for league play.
- f. Catchers must wear appropriate protective equipment, either supplied by the league or their own (helmet, face mask, chest protector, and shin guards).
- g. **NO BIG BARREL BATS PERMITTED. Bats with barrels over 2-5/8" in diameter are not allowed.**
- h. Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted.
- i. Players must wear batting helmets when on-deck, at bat, and running the bases.
- j. Defensive players should wear hats in the field.

2. Pitching Rules

- a. Pitching shall be done by a coach (or other person designated by the coach), overhand from no closer than 32 feet from the plate. The pitching coach must quickly leave the field so as to avoid interfering with a hit ball or the play and remain off the field until the play is ruled dead.
- b. If the pitching coach fails to exit the field and, in the judgment of the umpire, interferes with the play, the umpire may stop the play, call the batter out and return any runners to the bases that they began the play on.
- c. The play is dead if the pitching coach is inadvertently hit with a batted ball. The pitch does not count, no runners advance and the batter returns to the plate.
- d. Each batter will have a maximum of (6) pitches or (3) strikes. Missed swings, foul balls and foul tips are counted as strikes. If the sixth pitch or third strike is hit foul or a foul tip, the player continues to bat until they either swing and miss or hit the ball into fair territory. There are no walks.

3. Other Playing Rules

- a. Free substitution is permitted at all positions.
- b. Each team must field a minimum of six (6) players within five (5) minutes of the scheduled start time of each game. Failure to do so results in forfeit. If a team plays with fewer than 9 players, the coach may choose which positions to leave vacant. In the event of a forfeit, teams are permitted to play a "scrimmage" game.

Substitution players are permitted to help get a team to nine players. The sub player must be someone currently playing for Danny Smith Park that is the same age or younger. Teams may also field an opposing team's player in an outfield position, with the approval of the

opposing team to fill a space. Any other substitution circumstance must receive approval from the Danny Smith Memorial Park Board of Directors. No exceptions.

- c. If a team plays with fewer than eight (8) players, they may, at the option of the opposing coach, be assessed not more than one (1) out per batting rotation at the end of the batting order. The opposing coach wishing to impose the assessed out must invoke the option to do so before the start of the game. If this rule is not specifically invoked by a coach, it shall not be applied and no automatic out assessed. The umpire is not responsible for alerting a coach to the option to invoke the rule or to inquire if a coach wishes to assert it.
- d. Each team is permitted to play six (6) infielders and four (4) outfielders. Outfielders must remain on the grass until the ball is hit. Outfielders may play approximately left field, left center, center, right-center, or right field positions.
- e. The player-pitcher shall play even with or behind the coach pitcher. The player-pitcher may stand on either side of the coach pitcher and must remain within six (6) feet of the coach pitcher.
- f. Each team shall bat its entire roster, in the batting order before returning to the top of its batting order, irrespective of whether a player played in the field that inning. Exceptions may be made for injury, illness or timid players. Outs will not be assessed for batters that miss their at-bat in the order due to injury, illness or reluctance. Sick, injured or timid players shall be permitted to rejoin play.
- g. Base stealing and lead-offs are not permitted. Runners may not leave base until the pitch has been hit. If, in the opinion of the umpire, a player left base early, the play may be called dead, the pitch will not count, and the runner(s) will be required to return to the base previously occupied. A player who is warned for leaving the base early on three consecutive occasions in the same inning shall be called out on the third occasion.
- h. Runners will be awarded ONE base on overthrows regardless of how many overthrows take place in a given individual situation during an inning. Runners shall be awarded the next base on a ball that goes out of play.
- i. There shall be no limit to the number of bases a runner can take when a ball is hit to the outfield.
- j. Play will stop when, in the judgment of the umpire, play has stopped or stalled. This is to prevent unsportsmanlike and game-delaying base-running tactics (e.g. baserunners "dancing" or attempting to bait fielders into making throws).
- k. Base runners must slide feet first at all bases and home plate. A player sliding head-first shall be called out. Diving back to a base on an overrun is permitted.
- l. Runners must slide into home any time there is a play at the plate. Catchers shall not obstruct home plate unless in the act of fielding or receiving the ball or making a tag on the runner. Runners shall attempt to avoid contact with the catcher at home and shall not attempt to "run over" a catcher to knock the ball loose in a play. If, in the umpire's judgment, a runner could have avoided contact and failed to do so, or failed to slide with a play at the plate, the runner shall be called out.
- m. There is no infield fly rule.
- n. Up to two (2) defensive coaches are permitted to be on the field in fair territory during play. These coaches must remain in the outfield during play, but may enter the infield during dead-ball periods to instruct players. If a defensive coach is hit by a batted ball in fair territory, the batter is awarded a ground-rule double and all runners on base at the time of the hit score.

4. Baserunning

- 1. Hash marks will be added between 1st and 2nd base, 2nd and 3rd base, and 3rd and home plate. Marks will be half-way between bases, or 30 feet.*
- 2. Umpires will watch the LEAD RUNNER, and determine if the runner is past, or behind the hash-mark at the point that time is called.*
- 3. A defensive player, not necessarily an infielder, must be in possession of the ball ON THE INFIELD DIRT, and CALL TIME. When time is called and recognized, play is stopped.*
- 4. To call time, a player needs to yell "time", or "time-out" and also signal with hand, arms or hands for the umpire to recognize.*
- 5. If at the moment that time is called, and play is stopped, a runner is at, or past the hash-mark, they will be awarded the lead base, and if they are behind the mark, they must return to previous base, and all trail runners will be moved back accordingly.*
- 6. Trail runners will also be subject to the same regulations, though this is not the immediate priority of the umpire.*
- 7. The best judgment of the umpire will rule these calls, and the umpire's ruling is final.*

5. Umpiring, Time and Scoring Rules

- a. One umpire shall be used for each game. At its discretion, the Board may employ two umpires, in which event the home plate umpire shall be the head umpire. Umpires will make all calls. An umpire's judgment calls are final and not subject to challenge. Challenges or protests concerning application or interpretation of the rules shall be made to the Board.
- b. All games should start at the scheduled start time. In the event of delay, the home plate umpire shall determine the actual start time. The home plate umpire is the official time keeper.
- c. If an umpire is not available, coaches for the offensive team shall umpire that half of the inning, maintain pitch counts, et cetera. The head coach of the home team will declare the actual start time of the game prior to the first pitch being thrown.
- d. Teams are not guaranteed infield warm-up prior to games. When time permits, infield warm-up time should be shared evenly between the teams.
- e. Games shall be five (5) innings in length (4-½ if the home team is leading), subject to the time limits set forth herein. In the event of a tie, extra innings may be played, also subject to time limitations. A regular season game may end in a tie due to time limits.
- f. **Time Limits in Regular Season Games:** No new inning shall be started more than seventy-five (75) minutes after the **actual start time** of the game, as determined by the umpire. All innings that are started shall be played to completion.
- g. **Tournament games are not subject to time limits.**
- h. Games will be declared complete if, after three (3) or more complete innings (2-½ if the home team is ahead) the game is stopped due to weather conditions. If fewer than 3 (or 2-½)innings have been completed, the game will be rescheduled (calendar permitting) and resumed at the point it was stopped, as opposed to being restarted.
- i. There shall be a cap of five (5) runs per team per inning, except in the final inning of the game which shall be an uncapped "open" inning. The umpire shall declare the open inning prior to either the 5thinning or what the umpire determines to be the final inning of the game

based upon time limits. The open inning is not guaranteed. If extra-innings are played in the case of a tie, those innings shall be “capped” at five (5) runs per inning.

j. There is no “mercy” or “runs ahead” rule (e.g. 10-run rule).

6. Participation and Sportsmanship Rules

- a. Each player shall be given the opportunity to play at least one inning in the infield each game. No player will be made to play in the infield if that is their choice. We also encourage the coaches to use their primary infield players in the outfield to help the players develop the skills necessary to play the outfield.
- b. No player may sit defensively for more than one inning (three outs in the field) unless every other player on the team has sat defensively for one inning, i.e. all players must sit one inning before any player may sit two innings.
- c. Teams shall roster bat, meaning every player in attendance shall bat in the batting order. Exceptions shall be made for injury or illness or timid players. Outs will not be assessed for batters that miss their at-bat in the order due to injury, illness or reluctance. Sick, injured or timid players shall be permitted to rejoin play.
- d. Baserunners should not “dance” or attempt to bait fielders into throws.
- e. Trash talking, abusive language, vulgarity and unsportsmanlike conduct are unacceptable at Danny Smith Park. Players, coaches, parents or fans engaging in this conduct may be removed from the Park or subject to other sanction at the discretion of the Board.

7. The Board may interpret, change, modify or suspend these rules as deemed necessary.

****NEW FOR 2024**- DOUBLE BASE AT FIRST RULES AND PROCEDURES**

(a) A batted ball that hits the white section of the double base shall be declared fair. A batted ball that hits the orange section without first touching or bouncing over the white section shall be declared foul.

(b) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the defense must use the white section of the double first base.

NOTE 1: A play is being made on the batter-runner when he/she is attempting to reach first base while the defense is attempting to retire him/her at that base.

NOTE: 2: If there is a play on the batter-runner, and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base, it is treated the same as missing the base. Therefore, the batter-runner is declared out.

(c) Whenever a play is being made on the batter-runner, the batter-runner must use the orange section on his/her first attempt to tag first base. NOTE: On extra-base hits or other balls hit to the outfield when there is no chance for a play to be made at the double first base, the batter-runner may touch either the white or colored (orange or green) section of the base. Should, however, the batter-runner reach and go beyond first base, he/she may only return to the white section of the base. PENALTY: If there is a play on the batter-runner, and the batter-runner touches only the white portion and the defense appeals prior to the batter-runner returning to first base, it is treated the same as missing the base. If properly appealed, the batter-runner is out.

(d) When tagging up on a fly ball, the white section of the base must be used by the runner. One foot is permitted to extend behind or on the base into foul territory, as long as the front foot is touching the white section of the base. PENALTY: If properly appealed, the runner is out.

(e) If the batter-runner collides with the fielder who is only on the white portion of the bag attempting to catch the ball, it is **interference. The runner is ruled out.**

If the fielder is only standing on the orange portion of the bag and there is a collision prior to the fielder catching the ball, it is **obstruction. The runner is ruled safe.**

If both players are doing what they are supposed to do and there is a collision, it may be incidental contact and no penalty assessed.