

2026 Pony Express League Rules

1. Schedule:
 - A. The number of games will be determined by the number of teams in the league.
 - B. All games will count towards divisional standings.
 - C. Incomplete games or games postponed by rain will be made up on the first available day.

2. Length of Games:
 - A. For 6:00 PM games: each game will consist of seven (7) complete innings; No inning will start after **7:45** PM in the condition that there is an 8:00 PM or 8:30 PM game. Two (2) hour time limit for all regular season games. If there is an 8:00 game following, no inning will start past 8:00 regardless of start time. **Games may start early if umpires and teams are ready.**
Playoff games will have no time limit. Start time is determined during ground rules.
 - B. For 8:00 PM games: each game will consist of at least 7 complete innings; No inning will start after 1 hour and 45 minutes from first pitch. No new inning will start after **10 PM on school nights**, regardless of the game start time. Teams may go into extra innings if the score is tied and time allows.
 - C. **Each team must field at least 8 players within 15 minutes of scheduled start time or team is subject to forfeit. League official may overturn this decision on the spot.**
 - D. Each half inning will conclude with three (3) outs, or maximum runs per inning is reached reference rule 4B, Except last inning (7th or extra inning only), when unlimited runs are allowed.
 - E. New inning begins after last out is made from previous team batting. For example, if last out is made at 7:58 PM then the new inning begins at 7:58 PM.
 - F. Each team will bat their line-up.
 - G. If a game is called because of weather, before it is complete, it shall be played from the start. For Rainout games – check with your city.
 - H. If a game is called because of weather, it shall be a complete game if five innings have been completed, or if the home team has scored more runs in four innings or four and a fraction innings, than the visiting team has scored in five complete innings. **A game is also considered complete if it qualifies as such under the mercy rule (9G).**
 - I. Teams must schedule makeup games within 1 week or both teams are subject to forfeit.
 - J. Lightning rule: Wait 15 minute wait after last lightening strike before resuming game.
 - K. **Directors may only extend a game in the interest of making it an official complete game (5 inning rule or mercy rule) beyond the 1 hour and 45 minutes limit provided the it does not cause a curfew issue with other games.**
 - L. **Teams have 90 seconds to get their teams ready between innings.**
- Umpire may call “Balls” if pitcher does not pitch withing 90 seconds.
- Umpire may call “Strikes” if batter is not ready to bat within 90 seconds.

3. Managers and Coaches:
 - A. Managers will set a good example of sportsmanship for all coaches, players, spectators, and umpires.
 - B. Managers must call all team members to notify them of the time and place for all practices, make up games, and all other team functions.

- C. No team member, coach, manager, or spectator may dispute an umpire's judgment call. This rule will be strictly enforced. Any abuse of this rule can lead to the managers or coach's suspension or dismissal by the League Director or Commissioner.
- D. The manager and coach for each team will meet with the opposing manager and coach prior to the game to exchange batting orders and to go discuss ground rules. Batting orders are to be written prior to this meeting.
- E. Batting lineup is submitted to opposing team prior to ground rules.
- F. Batting lineup must consist of uniform number and last name.
- G. Announce no shows, injuries, and suspensions prior to the game. A no show may be placed at the bottom of the batting lineup when he arrives.
- H. A manager/coach ejection from the game is subject to suspension of future games. The opposing team needs to notify the director as soon as possible.
- I. Score, Pitchers and innings pitched must be reported by each team to ensure fair play. Score book must be signed by coaches of both teams next to pitchers of record in that game, in BOTH score books, in ink. If no signature from previous game in current week, pitcher in question may only pitch 1 inning.
- J. Coaches from opposing team may review your team's current week worth of pitching at any point during the game.

4. Offensive Rules:

- A. All players **MUST** be placed in the batting rotation, and **MUST** bat in proper sequence. Batting orders cannot be changed after the game begins, unless a player is unable to complete the rest of the game.
- B. Each team may score up to 7 runs per inning except for the 7th inning or extra inning where unlimited batters and unlimited runs with less than 3 outs are allowed.
- C. If a player **intentionally** throws a bat, that batter will be called **and may be subject to ejection**.
- D. **If a batter accidentally throws and hits the catcher with the bat, the batter shall be called out.**
- E. If a player leaves the lineup, **for any reason including** injury or ejection, the batting position will not be considered an automatic out. The player will not be eligible for re-entry into the lineup. The opposing team will be notified.
- F. If a player is skipped because he is unavailable to bat, not because of injury or ejection, his team will accept the out and the player will continue to participate in the game. The opposing team will be notified.

5. Defensive Rules:

- A. There will be three outfielders, unless there only 8 fielders.
- B. Outfielders must be inbound and on the grass with both feet, before the ball reaches home plate.
- C. **No player will sit for more than one more inning than any other player on the team. Clarification: No player may sit for more than one inning while there are players on the team who have not sat for one inning. No player may sit for more than two innings while there are players on the team who have not sat for two innings. No player may sit for more than three innings while there are players on the team who have not sat for three innings. See pitching exception below.**
- D. **Pitching exception to mandatory sitting rule: A pitcher may legally be in violation of this rule if he is still pitching but once he is taken from the mound for another position while in violation of the rule, this pitcher must be placed on the bench until he has sat the required innings in rule C.**

6. Player Conduct:
 - A. Players not in the field, batting, or in the on deck circle must stay on the bench at all times.
 - B. There will be absolutely no harassment of opposing players. Penalty is player, managers, and coaches' removal from the game (this includes "HEY BATTER").
 - C. A player's ejection from the game is subject to suspension of future games. The opposing team must notify the director as soon as possible.

7. Pitching Rules:
 - A. No intentional walks
 - B. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of ten (10) innings per week. A week is considered Monday through Sunday.
 - C. Pitchers may not pitch more than 5 innings per game except in the case of a doubleheader. Pitchers may not pitch more than 3 innings per game in a doubleheader.**
 - D. Pitcher must have at least 40 hours of rest between outings if a pitcher pitches 4 or more innings in a game. **If there is a doubleheader, pitchers may only pitch up to 3 innings per game and bypass the 40 hour rest rule for the second game.**
 - E. One (1) pitch constitutes an inning/outing.
 - F. Players may take the catcher position and/or pitcher position up to 7 innings in a doubleheader. This means a player may play pitcher and/or catcher in any combination for up to 7 innings in the two games. Your score book must show the complete name of the pitchers/catchers, the innings pitched/caught and the Manager of the opposing team must sign and date it in ink for every game. The catcher documentation only applies for doubleheaders. The Penalty for not doing this is the pitchers listed will only be allowed to pitch one inning during the next game. **Coaches from opposing team may review your team's current week's worth of pitching at any time during the game.**
 - G. Balks: One (1) warning per pitcher. Arguing a balk is not permitted but clarification may be requested.
 - H. Violation of these pitching rules will subject the game to be forfeited and the manager dismissal.
 - I. If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in a game or inning, he must be removed, but allowed to stay in the game and play another position. This does not mean he cannot pitch the next game.
 - J. Innings pitched in a game, which is rained out, cancelled, or suspended, will count toward weekly pitching totals.
 - K. Three warm up pitches between innings.**

8. Playoffs: Subject to number of teams in the league
 - A. Seeding will be determined through the tiebreaker rules as follows:
 1. Overall record.
 2. Head to head.
 3. Least runs allowed among teams involved.
 4. Run differential between tied teams (+ high number = higher seed).
 5. Coin Toss.
 - B. Playoff pitching rules will be the same as the regular season.

9. General Rules:

- A. This league is to provide 13 and 14-year-old boys with the opportunity to learn and play organized baseball. Emphasis will be on teaching and learning the fundamentals of baseball, following the Rules and Regulations.
- B. Injured players must be attended to immediately. All play must stop if the injury appears to be in the slightest way serious. The player's parents must be contacted immediately. An accident report must be filled out within twenty-four (24) hours. Base runners shall be awarded bases at the umpire's discretion.
- C. **NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS WILL BE ALLOWED ON OR NEAR A PLAYING OR PRACTICE AREA. ANY VIOLATION OF THIS RULE BY A MANAGER, COACH, PLAYER, OR SPECTATOR WILL LEAD TO IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION AND/OR LEGAL ACTION.**
- D. All rules not covered above will be covered under Pony Baseball Rules.
- E. There is no smoking on the Playing Field, or in the Dugout.
- F. All protests must be in accordance with the Protest form.
- G. **MERCY RULE: 15 run lead after 4 complete innings (3 ½ if home team is ahead) or 10 run lead after 5 complete innings (4 ½ if the home team is ahead).**
- H. Teams can play with 8 players. 7 or less is a forfeit.
- I. Any violation of the before mentioned rules may result in forfeiture of that game.
- J. Pitcher's mound to home plate is 54 feet and is laid out by the home team.
- K. Bases are 80 feet apart.
- L. Home team supplies two NEW game balls and the Visitors supply one good USED ball.
- M. The league reserves the right, with the power vested in the board of directors, to amend, nullify, alter, or change any rule or policy it deems, to be in the best interest of the league and its participants.
- N. Score, pitchers and innings pitched per pitcher must be reported by each team to ensure fair play.
- O. Players must run on and off the field.
- P. If a team will only have 7 players at game time, that team may pick up another house player in the Bronco or Pony league. Replacement players will not be required to wear the same team uniform. They are **NOT** allowed to pitch or catch. Contact your League Director immediately. Director/Manager must notify the opposing team as soon as possible.
- Q. Coaches may make one trip to the mound per inning per pitcher before they are required to remove the pitcher from the mound.
- R. **Non ejected players may only be suspended from games pending approval of league officials for the city affiliated with the player in question. 24 hour noticed is required.**
- S. **Runners must slide or give up on a play to a base/plate that may result in contact. This rule is designed to protect defensive players from injury.**
 - 1. **On a play where there is no contact and a player does not slide, the player shall not be considered out.**
 - 2. **A player shall be called out while he does not slide to a base/plate when a play is being made and the play results in contact with the defensive player.**
 - 3. **If a player accidentally runs into a fielder/catcher because the fielder or catcher steps one way or another to without the ball then the player shall not be called out.**
 - 4. **The defensive player may not block home plate before he has the ball for this may result in unnecessary contact. If a runner slides into the defensive player at home plate who does not have the ball, the**

runner shall be considered safe due to the defensive player's interference.