Meadows Place PONY Baseball Ground Rules
Shetland Division (4-, 5-, & 6-year-olds)

Managers are required to have a copy of the rules in their possession for each game.
PONY Baseball rules (https://www.pony.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1026027) and MLB rules shall apply unless otherwise specified.

Objectives

- Shetland Division focuses on instruction of beginning players.
- Managers and coaches will teach players to properly swing a bat, catch, throw and run the bases.
- Players are encouraged to experience different positions throughout the season.

Sportsmanship

- Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated. Umpires will maintain control and have the authority to eject or remove players, coaches, or fans from the facility. Umpires should not be approached after the game under any circumstances.
- Any manager, coach, player, or fan demonstrating unsportsmanlike behavior may be ejected from the game and may be suspended for additional games.
- Razzing, heckling, chanting, or making disparaging remarks or noises directed at opponents in any manner is prohibited. Shakers or noise makers are not allowed. For the safety of all players and to maintain integrity of the game, organized cheering or chanting is not allowed while the batter is preparing to hit the ball. Like all rules, enforcement is subject to umpire judgment.
- Foul and abusive language will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Cursing or throwing equipment is grounds for an automatic ejection.
- There is a zero-tolerance policy for making threats or taking physical action. Any occurrence will be immediately reported to the Board and the proper authorities.

Declared League Age

- As part of the League registration, each player MUST declare a league age (determined by their age on May 1) for the up coming season. Once a player determines their league age for the season, they may NOT change their league age for the remainder of that season.
- As permitted by PONY baseball rules, MPPB has adopted the “And Under” player age chart, which will allow players to move up one age division, ONLY under the following conditions.
  1. The player’s age MUST be within 1 year of the age division they wish to move up to.
  2. The player MUST have played at least 1 full season at the lower division with MPPB (other leagues will not count).
  3. The player’s safety and well-being will be a priority for final determining of moving up a division.

Player Draft Process

- Draft day and the draft procedures will be pre-determined by the board prior to the start of the regular season. All coaches or coach representatives shall be present at the player draft. All coaches will receive a list of available players (player’s pool).

Game Length / Time Limits

- Maximum of 3 innings, but no inning will start beyond 1 hour after the official starting time.
- Time begins upon umpire’s notification to the managers. Subsequent innings begin the moment the third out is made (or fifth run scores) in the previous inning. The umpire is the sole judge of time.
- The game is completed when the time limit is reached, and additional play will not change the outcome. If time expires while the home team is batting and winning, the umpire shall announce, “Time has expired, ball game” before the next batter enters the batter’s box, not during a player’s “at bat”. If time expires while the visiting team is batting and is behind in the score and can mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire shall announce, “Time has expired, we will complete

the inning". If time expires while the visiting team is batting and winning, and the home team cannot mathematically tie or take the lead, the umpire shall announce, "Time has expired, ball game".

- If the game is called due to weather or other hazardous conditions, it is an official game if 2½ innings (home team leading) or 3 innings have been completed. Games may end in a tie.

Postponed or Canceled Games

- Any game that is postponed or canceled that requires to be made up will use the following format to be re-scheduled.
  1. If a game is postponed due to weather, (or availability of lights, etc.) it shall be picked up at the exact place where left at. Batting order, runners on base, fielding position, score, etc… shall resume as a continuation from where the game was halted. New "pick up" players are NOT allowed for the re-scheduled game.
  2. The make-up game should be attempted to be re-scheduled on the Home Team's next practice. The Home Team has the option to use either its mandatory practice or its optional practice for this game.
  3. The coaches MUST coordinate with the league's scheduling officer (or president) to determine when the make-up game will be played. This will assure that umpire(s) can be scheduled for the game and that the game does not conflict with other games or practices.
  4. Should any team fail to show up or have enough players for the re-scheduled game, the game will be called, and the win will go to the team that has enough players and ready to play.

Run Rules

- A maximum of 5 runs allowed per inning per team (3 outs or 5 runs will constitute an inning for the offensive team).
- The game is called if a team is behind by 10 runs after 2 complete innings.

Roster

- A minimum of 5 players must be present or the game will be called a forfeit at 10 minutes past the scheduled start time.
- There is no penalty for playing with 5 players.
- The game will be called a forfeit any time a team has fewer than 5 eligible players.
- Prior to starting the game, Managers should exchange copies of the game lineup, including player names, uniform numbers, and batting order.
- Every player present for a game is in the batting order for the duration of the game (Roster Bat).
- Any late arriving player(s) shall assume the last position in the batting order, regardless of when they arrive for the game.
- If a player is unable to continue playing due to injury or illness, the team will not be penalized when it is the missing player's turn to bat.
- Players who must leave before the end of the game may do so. Their position in the batting order will be ignored for the rest of the game and no out will be charged.
- Players not registered with Meadows Place PONY Baseball and not assigned to the team are ineligible. Players cannot participate in more than one PONY baseball division (i.e., Shetland and Pinto) at the same time. Only players who have played in the Shetland division are eligible to participate in the MPPB Shetland All-Star program.

Pick-up Players

- If teams have fewer than 9 players present prior to the start of a game, they may use another player "pick up" from another team, under the following conditions:
  1. The "pick up" player(s) MUST be registered MPPB player(s).
  2. The "pick up" player(s) can ONLY play in the outfield; they cannot play at the pitcher, catcher, or infield positions. The "pick up" player(s) are allowed to bat but MUST be put at the bottom of the batting order.
  3. The "pick up" player(s) may be from the same division or one division lower. Teams are only allowed a maximum of three "pick up" players. Teams MUST have fewer than 9 players to use

"pick up" players. Teams may only use "pick up" players to put their team at no more than nine players.

Batting

- Only bats approved by PONY Baseball for play at the respective divisions will be allowed to be used. Refer to the official PONY Rule Book for specific approved bats.
- Managers are expected to check each player's equipment prior to each game. Illegal equipment will be removed from the game with no penalty. No bat shall be used if dented, cracked, modified, or misshaped.
- An appointed coach shall accompany each batter while their team is on offense. This will be the batting coach for the team and will be the umpire in charge for the half inning if league umpires are not available.
- The batting tee shall be placed on top of home plate, covering home plate, by the batting coach, who is responsible for removal prior to any play at home plate.
- Only league-approved batting tees are allowed. Only league-approved safety (T-ball) baseballs are allowed, and new balls MUST be used for each game.
- A batter will be given no more than five swings to hit the ball off the tee. The batter shall be called out after failing to hit the ball after five swings. The batter is not out on a foul or foul tip unless it is a fifth swing.
- Batters are not allowed to adjust the tee or take practice swings after the ball has been placed on the tee. A practice swing attempt will constitute as one of their 5 allowed swings.
- Batters are not permitted to bunt at the ball at any time. It is the sole discretion of the umpire to determine whether a valid attempt to swing and hitting of the the ball was made.
- Teams should make every effort to bat the roster in order; however, there is no penalty for batting out of order (regular baseball rules state the player who should have batted -- the proper batter -- is called out, and any hit or advance made by the batter is nullified). Teams will not be penalized when a player leaves the game for a bathroom break or is temporarily unable to play for other reasons. When the player returns, they should be inserted in the next spot in the batting order for that rotation, and then return to their original spot in the next rotation.
- Verbal instructions to batters are permitted, and coaches may assist batters in their position in the batter's box is allowed.
- The penalty for throwing bats is umpire discretion and can result in an out and/or player's ejection. However, umpires will first give a warning and instruction on the proper way to "lay" a bat down after a hit.
- At the coach's discretion, any player may have the opportunity to hit coach-pitch style during a game. The at-bat must start as a coach-pitch at-bat. The player is given three pitches, or strikes whichever comes first, if on the third swing they fail to hit a fair ball. The ball will then be placed on the tee for them to continue. If the at-bat is forced back to a T-ball at-bat, the player will be hitting off the tee with three strikes and only has two more opportunities to put the ball in play.

Base Running

- When an out is made on a base runner, the runner must leave the field of play and return to the dugout.
- On an overthrow, a batter or runner can try to advance only one base. The defense can try to record an out against the runner or batter trying to advance on the overthrow.
- An "overthrow" is defined as a thrown ball which is not controlled by a defensive player.
- Base runners are not limited on running bases on balls hit to the outfield; however, base runners cannot advance once the ball is in the possession of an infielder and ruled a dead ball by the umpire at their discretion.
- The home plate umpire shall declare "Time" when the ball is in the possession of an infielder. Possession is defined as having control of the ball by holding it up in the air, and the infielder MUST be located in the infield area

- Base runners are not permitted to steal bases and shall remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit. PENALTY: If a runner is off the base and the ball is hit, the runner is out, and the ball is in play.
- Batters running to first base may turn left or right, provided that if they turn right (run through the base) they do not make an attempt to advance. The runner must immediately return to first after overrunning it.
- Base runners may "tag up" after a fly ball is caught.

Defense

- Ten players should be used defensively … four in the outfield. Free substitution.
- No player may sit on the bench more than two innings, and innings sat out may not be consecutive innings unless the player refuses to play, injured or is unable to play.
- Good baseball fundamentals should be taught -- fielders should learn to throw to the proper base and should be discouraged from running down base runners to make an unassisted out.
- Infield -- Infield position players (1st, 2nd, 3rd and SS) must remain within 3 feet of the assumed base path until the ball is put into play. The assumed base path is an imaginary line drawn directly from 1st to 2nd and from 2nd to 3rd. Players may be on either side of the assumed base path as long as the player is within 3 feet. Infield players may NOT block, trip, or push base runners, and may NOT stand on the bases unless they have possession of the ball and are attempting to put the base runner out.
- Every player must play at least one inning at an infield position each game by the third inning. Managers should provide every player with an equal opportunity to play infield and outfield to progress their development. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a one game suspension for the manager. A second offense will result in suspension for the remainder of the season or post-season play
- No infield fly rule … infielders must catch fly balls.
- Outfield -- Outfield players must remain behind the outfield arc (on the edge of the outfield grass and dirt of the infield) until the ball is put into play. Outfielders are expected to field their position and begin each swing on the outfield grass. Outfielders must throw or hand the ball to an infielder to record a dead ball at umpire's discretion. However, if the ball is batted through the infield and beyond the baseline, or is thrown to a player covering a base and is missed, outfielders may record an out by tagging the following assigned bases or tagging a runner advancing to or retreating back to an assigned base.
  Right Fielder- 1st Base
  Center Fielders- 2nd Base
  Left Fielders- 3rd Base
  Outfielders may also assist with an out by throwing to a player covering any other base. If an outfielder violates the backup rule, the play is ruled dead and the runners advance to next base from where runner began the play.
- Catcher -- The catcher shall stand behind the tee and at an angle from the batter – towards 1st base for right-handed batters and 3rd side for left-handed batters. The catcher may field the position defensively once the ball is in play but must not interfere with the batter-runner. The catcher must wear catcher's gear at all times. The catcher's arch shall extend 10ft from the front of home plate from baseline to baseline. Any hit ball that does not pass the catcher's arch and remain in fair territory is considered a fair ball and must be fielded by the catcher for a play attempt to occur. Once the catcher has fielded the ball, they may throw the ball to a player covering a base, attempt to tag a runner out or touch home plate on a force play. Should any player violate the catcher's arch, the ball is ruled dead and the batter is awarded first base. Other runners are allowed to advance only if forced. When bases are loaded and the ball is fielded beyond the catcher's arch, infielders must throw to the catcher covering home to record an out. When the ball is hit beyond the catcher's arch and the runner advancing from third is not forced, the runner advances at their own risk and infielders may record an out by wither tagging the advancing runner who ran on their own accord or by throwing the ball to another player to record the out.

- Pitcher -- The player fielding the pitcher's position must remain in contact with the pitcher's plate until the ball is put into play. The pitcher must throw the ball to any base to make an out on the batter or runner.
- Balls fielded beyond the catcher's arc (as marked on the grass) and the rest of the field must be thrown to the catcher if there is a force play at home.
- Pitchers may not play the ball that has been hit inside of the catcher's arch. Play will be ruled dead and runner awarded next base.

Umpires

- League umpires will be used. However, if a league umpire is not available, team managers or other league representatives may need to umpire and are expected to follow the rules without exception; the batting coach at home plate shall be the umpire in charge.
- Protests are not allowed. The decision of the umpire shall be final. Use your best judgment and common sense.
- The league umpire or home plate umpire shall declare "Time" when the ball is in the possession of an infielder.

Coaching

- Teams should have no more than 2 meetings per week, not to exceed 4 hours total, including games.
- Players, managers and coaches shall remain in the dugouts, on the benches or in the prescribed areas throughout the game. Teams may have no more than five coaches in the dugout at any time.
- In addition to 1st and 3rd base coaches, two coaches may be positioned in the outfield to provide verbal instructions to the defensive team.
- Pre-game warm-ups should be held in the outfield or common areas – no infield practice before games.
- Scorekeepers or others are not allowed to coach from the stands.
- The two teams playing the first game of the day are responsible for preparing the field for game play. This includes chalking the field, preparing water coolers for both dugouts and placing the American Flag in center field.
- The two teams playing the last game of the day are responsible for cleaning up the field. This includes, removing American Flag from center field, emptying trashcans in the both dugouts and around the field area, picking up all trash in the dugouts, around bleachers and the grass area around the field, emptying water cooler and returning them to the field house with lids off so they can dry out.
- The home team will keep the official scorebook for the game and the visiting team will manage the scoreboard, if applicable.
- All teams are responsible for cleaning up the dugouts, bleacher areas and grass areas around the field following their game.
- Parents should never "coach" from the stands or outside the fences. Please allow your team's on field coaches to do their jobs.
- No jewelry shall be worn by any player, except for medical identification.
- Cell phones, pagers or any other type of communication devices cannot be used on the field of play.
- Dugouts must be cleaned of litter before leaving.
- Tobacco and alcohol in any form is not allowed in the dugouts, buildings, stands or playing areas.

Post Season Tournament Rules

Post Season Tournament play, if applicable, will be determined by the league. Tournament rules will not vary from Regular season rules except for the following:

- Seeding will be determined by: (1) won-loss record, (2) head-to-head, (3) total runs allowed, (4) total runs scored, (5) coin flip.
- Home team is highest seed (lowest seed number), except Home team for the championship game is the team from the winner's bracket, regardless of original seeding.

- Playoff games can NOT end with a tie. All playoff games ending in a tie at the end of regulation time will use the International Tie-Break Rules to determine the winner. There are no time limits on Championship games (all divisions) and will be played until the completion of 3 innings. All Championship games ending in a tie at the end of 3 innings will then go to the International Tie-Break Rules to determine the winner.
- Pick up players WILL NOT be permitted during post-season play.

Governing Rules

Rules not covered by this document shall revert to the Official PONY Handbook and the Official MLB Handbook. Should any situation/incident that occurs during game play that is not covered by any of the above rules, the head umpire on the field will make final determination.