

PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION SOFTBALL RULES (Ages 8-17 Mustangs, Broncos, Colts & HS Divisions)



Revisions to PPBA Girls' Softball Rules, Effective Spring 2010 Season

(The following rules replace any rules to the contrary in the main Girls' Softball rules.)

Sliding Head First: Players who slide head first to a base will be called out. Diving back to an already acquired base shall be legal and shall not violate this rule.

Super Subs will be counted to prevent forfeits in tournaments and playoffs.

Playing Up to HS Softball Division (17 and under): The supersub rule was suspended for the 2010 season only for the HS Softball division to allow any number of Colt's aged players to also play on a HS division softball team.

Pitcher Substitution: Free substitution of pitchers is permitted at any time subject to the limitation of innings rules in the following chart. However, any and all pitchers who throw any number of pitches to the batter during an inning shall have an entire inning's work assessed against him. A pitcher must be removed on the second trip of a coach to the mound in the same inning or if the pitcher hits the number of batters listed in the following chart. If prior to the third out a pitcher is removed and goes to either the dugout or to a position in the field, that player may return to pitch during that or any other inning of the remainder of the game, subject to the innings limitation and the hit batters rules. Each time a player returns to pitch in the same half of the inning and throws at least one pitch, that player is charged with another inning's work.

Game Time Limit: For all softball divisions, no new inning shall may after 1 hour and 50 minutes from the official game start time. An inning that begins prior to 1 hour and 50 minutes from the official game start time shall be permitted to run to completion.

Mercy Rule: Total Run Differential (All Divisions): For all softball division games and subject to the time limit rule, games shall be ended if after four innings one team is ahead by 12 or more runs (or 3 ½ innings if the home team is ahead by 12 or more runs). If time remains, a new game may be played but must end within the original allotted time period regardless of which team is due to bat. There shall also be a per inning mercy rule as follows: Each team may score up to five runs in their half inning for the first three innings. For each inning thereafter, there shall be no limit to the number of runs each team may score (subject to the previously noted 12 run rule and the game time limit rule).

HS Girls Division Rules: The ball shall be the same as the one used for Colts games. There is no limit to the number of innings a pitcher can pitch. Teams can have either a 9 or 10 player batting order. That choice must be indicated on the lineup card at the beginning of the game and cannot be changed during the game. The Extra Player (EP) may be placed in any defensive position. If a team bats with an EP and one or more of the players leaves the game due to injury, the team can bat with fewer than ten players with no penalty, subject to the possibility of forfeit under the minimum player rule.

Pitching Rubber: The pitching rubber for all girls' divisions shall be the 24"x6",

Baserunner for the Catcher with Two Outs: Substituting a baserunner for the catcher-base runner when there is two outs shall be at the option of the offensive team's coach. If the catcher is replaced, the new baserunner must be the player who made the last out.

Effect of Forfeits on Ability to Play in Tournaments or Playoffs: A team that forfeits 3 games will not be entitled to participate in the season ending tournament or playoff. A forfeit is one in which the required advanced cancellation notice of 36 hours is not given.



PROSPECT PARK BASEBALL ASSOCIATION

GIRLS' SOFTBALL RULES

ALL DIVISIONS

Revised March 2008

All Rules are Current and Applicable for the 2009 Season

RULES OF PLAY

1. Official Rules:

The rules of the game cannot be abridged or changed by the managers or umpires before the game or during it. Rules comply with the current Pony Girls Softball and Regulations Rules (FP-fast pitch) unless excepted in these league rules. A complete copy of the PONY Rules may be downloaded free of charge from the PONY website (<http://www.pony.org/>).

Rules Governing Participation: Umpires, Coaches, and Players

2. The Umpire and Challenging Calls:

The rules of play are intended to guide the teams, teach the players the principles of the game and avoid disputes. Should there be any question regarding the rules, it will be resolved by the umpire. The role of the umpire is to officiate the running of the game. The umpire is the final and only arbiter of making umpiring calls. The coaches cannot question the umpire's judgment call. The only aspect they can question is the interpretation of the rule. If a coach disagrees with the interpretation of the rule he or she may file a complaint with the PPBA steering committee. If a coach argues a call or interpretation, whether it be on or off the field, the umpire is empowered to: (A) Throw the coach out of the game. (B) Suspend the game until the coach complies with the ejection. (C) Declare a forfeit by the ejected coaches' team if the ejected coach does not comply with the ejection within three minutes of the umpire's decision, and (D) Request that the coach be suspended from future games.

3. Coaches' Role:

The coach's role is to teach, manage and insure the administration of their team. The coach is expected to keep their fans and parents in check. If a fan disrupts or prohibits play of the game the umpire may stop the game until the fan stops or suspend the game due to the behavior of a fan or fans.

4. Official Roster:

All teams are responsible to provide an official team roster to the PPBA in accordance with the roster rules of the PPBA published separate from these rules. Prior to each game, each coach must submit to the opposing coach a lineup card containing the first and last name and jersey number of each player then present in order of how they will bat.

5. Age Limits:

Division	Age on April 30
Mustang	8, 9 or 10
Bronco	11, 12
Colt	13, 14, or 15

6. Goals of League Play:

Games are being played for instruction and fun. The emphasis is on teamwork, on doing your best, and on good sportsmanship.

Equipment, Attire, and the Playing Field

7. Equipment:

a. Bats:

All bats must conform to PONY rules, most notably, they shall be no more 2-1/4 inches in diameter at its thickest part, no more than 34 inches in length and not exceed 38 ounces in weight (PONY Rule 3.1); must be marked "Official Softball" by the manufacturer; if this marking is worn off or unreadable, the umpire shall determine the bat's eligibility. If a player steps into the batter's box with an illegal bat she shall be called out, in accordance with rule 8.10.c; if the illegal bat is discovered after a pitch is thrown to the next batter, all actions as a result of the use of the illegal bat by the batter in question shall stand. Coaches should make an effort to learn the difference between softball and baseball bats in order to avoid unnecessary injury to players.

b. Balls:

Each team is responsible for bringing one new ball to each game. At the end of the game, managers are responsible for retrieving their game ball, if desired. Balls for each division:

Mustang: 11 inch RIF level 10, optic yellow, leather cover, red stitch.

**Bronco / Colt: 12 inch ball of any brand, as long as it meets these specifications:
Optic yellow leather cover, red stitch, MAX .47 core, MAX compression 375 lbs.**

NO HIGH COMPRESSION BALLS.

c. Bases:

The HOME TEAM shall supply Bases, Home Plate and Pitching Rubber. The VISITINGTEAM shall supply a courtesy ^{1st} base which shall have the same dimensions as the bases supplied by the Home Team. The courtesy ^{1st} base shall be placed alongside and touching the right side of ^{1st} base, and shall rest on the foul side of the foul line. A courtesy _{1st} base must be used by the batter-runner when a play is being made on her at ^{1st} base; the fielder must use the fair territory base for a play on a batter-runner. If a batter-runner fails to use the foul-side base and, in the umpire's judgment, interferes with a play at _{1st} base, the batter-runner shall be declared out. By the same token, if a fielder attempts to make a play on the batter-runner and uses the foul-side base, the runner shall be declared safe. After the

batter-runner becomes a runner, the base in fair territory shall be used exclusively by that runner (for tagging up, etc.).

d. The field of play:

Bases and pitching distances:

Division	Bases	Pitching
Mustang	50 feet	28 feet
Bronco	60 feet	35 feet
Colt	60 feet	40 feet

*(home plate point to the front of the pitcher's plate)

Pitcher's circle:

An imaginary or chalk circle shall extend in an 8ft radius around the pitcher's plate. Once the pitcher has control of the ball within the pitcher's circle, base runners must immediately retreat to the base just occupied or advance to the next base. The penalty is the runner being called out.

e. Protective Equipment:

Batters: All players must wear a batting helmet while at bat and a batting helmet or a running helmet while on base. Replacement of helmet in the field requires that time out be called.

Catcher: The catcher must wear helmet, mask (with throat protector), chest protector, and shin guards while playing the field.

f. Uniforms: All players must be in full uniform in order to be allowed to play, which must include a team hat (and/or visor) and shirt (which bears a number that is unique to that player on that team). No jeans are permitted. Only baseball or sweat pants or shorts with knee socks are permitted. Rubber soled athletic shoes with or without rubber cleats may be worn, metal spikes are prohibited.

g. Jewelry:

No watches or removable jewelry may be worn. Jewelry permanently affixed to the body can be worn provided, in the judgment of the umpire, that it is completely covered by a bandage/band-aid. (Barrettes to hold back hair are permitted and "starter posts" may remain in ear lobes).

Prior to Game Start

8. Ground rules; bat inspection; lineup cards; late or no umpire, dugouts

- < An official umpire provided by the league must confer jointly with both managers prior to each game to review the ground rules.
- < The umpire shall inspect each team's bats for illegal or banned bats. Any disallowed bats shall be removed from the field of play.
- < Batting lineups including names and numbers for each team (using only players on the official roster) will be exchanged at this time.
- < In the event the official umpire is late or absent the managers will designate the game umpires. Only umpires can call timeout.

- < The home team shall take the dugout that has the water fountain. As a courtesy to the next team, please leave dugouts clean.

9. Minimum Team; Forfeits; Late Players

- < **Minimum team:** A team failing to field at least 8 players 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time, as determined by the umpire according to the provisions of these rules, shall forfeit the game. A game should then be played dividing all available players. The umpire will officiate for a minimum of 3 innings. The purpose of this rule is two-fold; a) The players who come should have the opportunity to play; b) The players who do not come must realize that there is a consequence for failing to support their teammates and for failing to arrive at scheduled games on time.
- < **Late Players:** A player who arrives after the line-ups have been exchanged and the umpire calls "play ball" will take place in the batting order after the last player listed.
- < **Loss of players during game:** If a team, for any reason, cannot field at least 8 Players during the course of the game, that team shall forfeit the game and play shall Continue for the balance of the time period by dividing all the available players.
Interrupted Game: In the event a game is continued (whether on another day or much later in the same day), a player who did not come to the first part of the game is eligible to play in the continued part of the game and shall be placed at the end of the batting order.

During the Game: Participation and Behavior

10. Playing Time; Defensive Positions; Free Substitution; Pitcher Substitution. All members of each team must play a defensive position in the field for at least two full innings or nine outs during the first four innings. (Players on a team with more than 15 players in attendance need only play one inning or three outs during the first two innings.) Except for reasons of discipline or injury, no player should sit on the bench for more than one inning in a row. Ten defensive positions are covered—the nine standard positions are filled along with an extra outfielder that is positioned in the outfield at the discretion of the team manager. All outfielders must take their positions on the outfield grass, at least 10 feet from the infield, and may not move into the infield until the ball is put into play. Free substitution and/or shifting of defensive players are permitted at any time, with the following exception for pitchers: A starting pitcher may be removed from the mound to the bench or to another defensive position and returned once (Also see rule 20). A relief pitcher once removed from the mound cannot return to the mound.

11. Adults on the field

- < **Bench Coach:** All teams should have a bench coach to keep the line-up in order, to keep score, and to have players ready to bat. Players must run on and off the field. Coaches are expected to have the line-up handy in order that games may be played expeditiously.
- < **Max. 4 adults:** No more than four adults (including managers and coaches) are permitted on the field or on the bench at any time during the game.
- < **Where adults may stand:** No adult is permitted in fair territory except while the umpire has called time out. Two adult coaches are permitted on the field (in foul

territory) during a team's offensive half of an inning (in the 1st base coach's box and the 3rd base coach's box). During a team's defensive half of an inning coaches should remain in the dugout or completely outside of the playing field. The only exception to this is in the Mustang division where one coach is permitted to assist with retrieval of the ball behind the catcher for the purposes of keeping the game moving only (not with live play). No excessive coaching is allowed during the game. Children may be reminded of proper techniques; however, this should not cause the game to be delayed. No coach is permitted to touch any player or the ball if it is in play. This may result in an out being called by the umpire. After the first three games an out will be called.

12. No Food, Smoking, in the Dugout or on the Field, etc.

No food is permitted on the bench or the playing field at any time during the game. No smoking on the playing field or alcoholic drinking on the field or in the dugouts is permitted by coaches, managers, umpires or others associated with the game while the game is underway.

13. No Heckling Rule

At the request of either manager, the umpire shall instruct that heckling or destructive comments (trash talk) made by a player or coach shall cease. The umpire is empowered to: First, warn the player or coach and his team; Second, eject an offending player or coach; and Third, end the game, granting a win to the non-offending team. The purpose of this rule is to encourage players and coaches to root FOR their team NOT against the other team

14. Throwing the Bat or Equipment

Throwing the bat or other equipment is not permitted. When, in the opinion of the umpire, a player intentionally throws a bat or piece of equipment, that player may, in the discretion of the umpire, be ejected from the game.

When a batter unintentionally throws the bat, that batter and that team **shall be warned**. Any batter on that team who **thereafter** unintentionally throws the bat **shall be called out**.

When a player unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, the team shall receive a warning. Thereafter, if any player from the same team whom unintentionally throws a piece of equipment, that team shall be assessed an out in its next at bat.

During the Game: Rules Governing Play

15. Between Inning Warm-ups: To conserve playing time field practice in the infield and outfield between innings should be limited to the time it takes the pitcher to take seven warm-up pitches.

16. Batting and Base Running Exceptions by Division

	Mustang	Bronco	Colt
Intentional Bunting	No	Yes	Yes
Stealing	No	No	Yes
Leading off	No	On release	On release

Penalty for early lead	One warning per player, then out	Out	Out
May run on dropped 3rd Strike	No	No	Yes*
Infield Fly Rule	No	No	Yes
Walks	With bases loaded, 5 balls needed to walk	4 balls	4 balls

- **Clarification: Dropped 3rd Strike Rule is in effect when 1st base is unoccupied with less than 2 outs OR anytime there are 2 outs.**

17. Batting; Batting Out of Order:

All players at a game must bat. All players must bat in order. If a batter is out of order, rule 8.2 of PONY rules shall apply (identical to rule 6.07 of baseball rules). A batter who is unable to bat because of injury will be removed from the game and the batting order will continue with the next listed batter. A batter who is unwilling (for whatever reason) to bat will be called out. The umpire alone will determine which batters are "Unwilling" and which are "Unable." A player who must leave the playing fields entirely for a pre-determined, parentally sanctioned activity will be considered "unable" to bat and no penalty will be assessed; the manager or bench coach must notify both the umpire and opposing team's manager when a player leaves a game before it is officially concluded.

18. Courtesy Runner for Catcher with 2 Outs:

To conserve playing time, when the catcher for the next half inning is a base runner and his team is assessed a second out, the catcher/base runner shall be replaced on the base path by the teammate that made the last out (at bat or on the bases) so that the catcher may put on the equipment.

19. Five Run Rule; Last Inning Exception, Mercy Rule

< **Five Run Rule:** Except in the last inning of play, if the team at bat scores five runs in a single inning, its half of the inning will end regardless of the score. In the last inning neither team will be limited in runs scored. Umpires should notify teams prior to the start of the inning if the inning is to be the last.

< **Mercy Rule:** A winner shall be automatically declared if:

Mustang:

Home team is ahead by 10 runs after 3 1/2 innings

Visiting team is ahead by 10 runs after 4 innings

Bronco / Colt

Home team is ahead by 10 runs after 4 1/2 innings

Visiting team is ahead by 10 runs after 5 innings

20. Pitching:

A player on the defensive team (in the field) will pitch. **No player may appear as a pitcher in more than three (3) innings (Mustang) four (4) innings (Bronco and Colt) in a single game.** Any pitchers who throws any number of pitches to the batter during an inning shall have an entire inning's work assessed against her.

All fast pitch styles are allowed, including windmill, slingshot and modified except that there is no windmill pitching for Mustangs.

a. Important points to note are:

⟨ The pitcher must begin her motion with both feet on the ground within the 24" length of the pitching plate. She shall take a position with both feet in contact with the pitching rubber (this is the only exception to PONY rules). The motion begins when the pitcher brings both hands together.

⟨ The pitcher's motion includes a pivot and a stride; in the act of delivering the ball, the pitcher must push off with the pivot foot from the pitcher's plate and take one step/stride forward toward the batter.

⟨ Having pushed off from the rubber, the rear pivot foot must stay in contact with the ground (NOT NECESSARILY WITH THE RUBBER) before the ball leaves the pitcher's hand. This is known as a "step and drag". The pivot foot cannot leave the ground and re-plant (this is known as a "crow hop" and is illegal).

⟨ The pitcher's delivery must be one smooth motion; it cannot stop. The pitcher may make only one revolution of the arm.

⟨ The pitcher may legally abort a pitch by stepping BACKWARD off the pitching rubber.

⟨ There is no such thing as a "balk" in softball. If the pitcher drops the ball or otherwise delivers it in an unintentional manner, the batter is awarded a ball. Where stealing is permitted, the ball is live and runners may advance at their own risk.

⟨ A hit batter is awarded first base when, in the judgment of the umpire, the batter has made a serious effort to avoid being hit by the errant pitch. If no effort is made to avoid being hit (in the judgment of the umpire), the pitch may be called a ball.

b. Mandatory removal of pitcher:

A pitcher must be removed from that position if he/she hits two batters in the same half inning or three in a game. (A batter is considered hit by a pitch even if struck by a ball that touches the ground first, i.e. a bouncing ball, provided the batter has made a serious effort, in the umpire's judgment, to avoid being hit.)

21. Stealing and Pick-off Plays

Stealing: Where stealing is permitted (Colts), base runners may take a lead once the pitcher releases the ball. Once the ball is returned to the pitcher, they must immediately make a decision to retreat or advance. A delayed steal occurs when the base runner advances as the catcher throws the ball to the pitcher; this is a legal play.

Pick-off Plays:

⟨ **Colt:** The pick-off by the catcher is a tag play. The ball is live and the runner may advance at her own risk. She does not need to tag up.

- ⟨ **Bronco:** The pick-off by the catcher is a force play. If the fielder tags the base or the runner before she returns to the base, she is out. The base runner may advance 1 base at her own risk on an overthrow into foul ball territory after first tagging up. A ball thrown out of play results in an automatic award of 2 bases to the runner.

22. Overthrown Ball

In accordance with Rule 9.5.g, in the event that a thrown ball goes out of play (into dead ball territory), the umpire shall immediately call "dead ball" and all base runners will be awarded two additional bases. If the runner(s) is (are) between bases at the time the ball leaves the fielders' hand, then the base runner(s) is (are) awarded the base(s) being approached at that time plus one more. There is no such award for a ball thrown into foul territory. In that case, play is still live.

23. Sliding, Interference, Obstruction

Failure to slide or make an attempt to slide into a base when a play is being made on a runner shall result in a call of "interference." The effect of this is that the runner is called out. In accordance with rule 9.8.s, if a runner deliberately crashes into a defensive player who has the ball, the runner shall be called out. If the act is flagrant, the runner shall be ejected from the game.

Likewise, a fielder may not deliberately impede the progress of a runner or her access to a base without risking a call of "obstruction" in accordance with rule 9.5.b; if a fielder obstructs a runner and neither has the ball, is attempting to field the ball, nor is about to receive a thrown ball, the runner shall be awarded the base she would have received, in the umpire's judgment, had there not been obstruction.

24. The Infield Fly Rule (COLT ONLY)

With less than 2 outs, and runners on first and second OR runners on first, second and third, a batter who hits a normally catchable fly ball to the infield is automatically called out, regardless of whether the ball is actually caught. Base runners advance at their own risk as they would on any fly ball.

25. Play Ends

BRONCO / COLT: When the ball is controlled by the pitcher in the 8' circle, the ball shall be dead and the batter-runner and/or base runners must immediately advance or return to the last base occupied; they may not hesitate or change direction. Penalty for "playing" with the pitcher: out called on the base runner. See rule 9.8.t for more information (the "Lookback Rule").

MUSTANG ONLY: when the pitcher controls the ball in the 8' circle, base runners that are more than halfway to the next base, in the umpire's judgment, shall be awarded the next base. If less than half-way, they must retreat to the previous base. Base awards shall be limited by the position of the lead runner.

End of Game:

26. Post Game Handshake:

All players on each team must line up after each game at home plate to exchange handshakes (in Stanley Cup style). Any disrespectful or disruptive behavior by any player or coach during the post game handshake may result in a one game suspension.

27. An Official Game; Last Inning; Rain Delays, Early Start

< **Official Game:** Game will be official and complete after one hour and fifty minutes (110 minutes) of playing time or six innings for Mustangs or seven innings for Broncos and Colts, whichever comes first.

Last Inning: No inning will begin during the last 15 minutes of the allotted time slot, but once begun, every attempt will be made to provide time to complete the last inning. The umpire will announce the beginning of the Last Inning to both managers at 15 minutes before the scheduled end of playing time

If Last Inning is called during the visiting team's half of the inning the unlimited run rule applies for the whole inning. If Last Inning is called after the visiting team's half of the inning and the visiting team was subject to the six (6) run limit then the home team is also subject to the (6) run limit even if this results in a tie or loss for the home team. **If during a playoff game a tie results the teams will play additional unlimited innings until a team wins. (See Section 31).**

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< **Rain Delay:** In the event of rain or other delay, four complete innings or one hour of playing time will constitute a complete game (3-1/2 innings if the home team is ahead). In the event that the final inning is incomplete after the allotted time has run out, the umpire will either; a) extend the playing time up to 15 minutes if possible or b) return the score to that of the last completed inning. If rain or wet fields cause the start of any game to be delayed by more than 1/2 hour, that game will be automatically canceled. All games following on the same field as any game with a rain-delayed start will be shortened by an equal amount to complete the day's schedule. For example, if the start of the first game of four games is delayed by twenty minutes, while water is removed from the field, then the time allotted for each of the four games will be reduced by five minutes and the respective start times delayed 20 minutes 15 minutes, 10 minutes and 5 minutes respectively. The umpires will be responsible for administering this rule.

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< If a game start is delayed because the prior game ended late, the new game playing time will be extended for a time equal to the delay up to 15 additional minutes. The Last Inning rule will apply to the new playing time. For example: the prior game ends at 11:20-the new game playing time will end at 1:05 with Last Inning called at 12:50

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Early Start: Games may actually be started before their scheduled start time if the field is empty, both teams agree and an umpire is available with the game ending at the regular scheduled time. Teams that can get started early and do not waste time get more playing time. However the umpire will extend the time for teams playing a long "last inning" and the following two teams, in this rare instance, may lose some playing time. Last games need only worry about darkness.

28. Rainouts

Every attempt must be made to play games as scheduled. It is difficult to predict spring weather even an hour in advance. When there is doubt, teams should meet. In other words, coaches should call their players only to cancel a game, not to tell them it will be played. Only the PPBA or the umpire may cancel games.

**PPBA will announce all rain cancellations or rain delayed starts on the PPBA
HOTLINE 888-473-6864.**

29. Grass Rules

If the umpire declares the infield unplayable and the game proceeds with the infield on grass, there shall be no stealing permitted and no dropped 3rd strike rule. All other rules apply including the sliding rules.

30. Playoff and Championship Games

The following special rules shall apply to playoff and championship games only:

- a. All games must end with a winner There can be no ties.
- b. The length of game shall be the same a regular season games except that in championship game there is no time limit and the game is to be played to the last inning (including extra innings, if necessary).
- c. All other regular season rules including mercy and pitching limitation rules apply to all playoff and championship games.

Code of Conduct Violations

Any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant who (1) engages in verbal or physical threats or abuse aimed at any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant; or (2) initiates a fight or scuffle with any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant during, at, immediately following, or otherwise in connection with a PPBA game or event shall be subject to being banned from any future PPBA game or event including coaching for or playing on any team participating in PPBA games or events. Such banning, in the sole discretion of the PPBA Board, may be temporary or permanent and subject to such other and additional conditions as may imposed by the PPBA Board, including but not limited to, family members of the offending person being banned from PPBA games and events.

The President or Vice President of the PPBA Board, or any individual or group of individuals duly appointed by the President of the PPBA, may temporarily ban any official, coach, parent, player, spectator or other participant accused of engaging in the above prohibited conduct from all PPBA games and events including coaching for or playing on any team participating in PPBA games or events. Such ban shall remain in effect until the next monthly or special meeting of the PPBA Board.