

WILLIAM S. HART PONY BASEBALL & SOFTBALL 2025 RULES OF PLAY

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BASEBALL & SOFTBALL

GENERAL RULES OF PLAY

SECTION I

MANAGERS & COACHES/PLAYERS

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct/Foul Language Ejection

- a. Any player who, in the umpire's judgment, intentionally tries to injure, or disrupt the play of another player while in the course of running the bases and is subsequently ejected from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct, shall also be recorded as an "out" on the play. (Base runners who are attempting to "beat the tag" by sliding into any base and as a consequence, collide with a defensive player, will not be considered unsportsmanlike in behavior by this act alone.)
- b. Any manager, coach, parent or player, using foul language or inappropriate behavior during a game will be ejected from the game without warning. **Zero Tolerance.**

2. Equipment Throwing Penalty - Any manager, coach or player who, in the judgement of the umpire **MALICIOUSLY**, throws or abuses the batting helmets, bats, or other equipment (whether league issued or not) will be ejected from the game by the umpire without prior warning.

3. Penalty for Use of an Illegal Bat –

- a. If detected before the first pitch of an at bat
 - i. Shetland, Pinto, & Mustang - the bat shall be removed from the game, the batter is declared out, and base runners shall not advance. The player will remain in the game and the manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.
 - ii. Bronco, Pony, & Colt – bat shall be removed from the game, the batter is declared out, and base runners shall not advance. The player and the manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.
- b. If detected after the first pitch (whether the pitch is swung at or not)
 - i. Shetland, Pinto, & Mustang – The batter is declared out and base runners shall not advance. The player will remain in the game and the manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.
 - ii. Bronco, Pony, & Colt – The batter is declared out and base runners shall not advance. The player and manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.
- c. If detected after the ball is hit
 - i. Shetland, Pinto, & Mustang – The batter is out, and base runners shall return to their original base prior to the hit advance. The player will remain in the game and the manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.
 - ii. Bronco, Pony, & Colt - The batter is out, and base runners shall return to their original base prior to the hit advance. The player and manager shall be ejected for the remainder of the game.

4. **Disciplinary Actions** - Benching of a player for disciplinary action shall be permitted before or during a game. The benching of a player for disciplinary reasons shall not be considered an “out” when the player is due to bat in the line-up. The umpire, opposing team manager, and the official scorekeeper must be notified immediately of any disciplinary action resulting in a player being benched. The plate umpire shall notify, as soon as practical, the League Director on Duty so that the incident may be properly annotated on the Incident Form on the Hart website. The form should be forwarded onto the League Vice President.
5. **Late Arrival** - Players missing at the start of the game may immediately be put into the game upon their arrival and their batting position shall be at the end of the original lineup.
6. **Minimum Play Requirements** - No player may sit out consecutive innings, and no player may sit out 2 innings per game unless all players have already sat out 1 inning; and a player may not sit out 3 innings until all players have sat out 2. This includes extra innings. A violation of this rule **WILL** result in a one-game suspension of the manager. Any subsequent violation of this rule will result in further discipline of the manager as deemed appropriate by the League Rules Committee. A player that has been designated to “sit out,” must sit out the entire inning (3 outs). Exceptions to this rule: 1) If an injury occurs on the field and the injured player is removed from play. 2) Pitch count supersedes the sit out rule *for starting pitchers only*.
7. **Uniform** - All players must be in complete uniform (i.e., pants, matching belts, socks, hats, and League issued jerseys). All players on the team must wear the same-colored pants with the single exception that farm players may wear the pants for their own team. For all leagues, jerseys will be completely and tightly tucked in so that the belt or waistband is visible. Hats will be worn with the center of the bill over the center of the nose.
8. **Jewelry** - The wearing of jewelry is not allowed (with the exception of medical alert identification) by any player on the field of play. (Band-aids may not be used to cover jewelry).

SECTION II

BATTING ORDER AND SUBSTITUTION

1. **Batting Order** - It is mandatory, in all divisions, that all players are in the batting lineup and free substitution is utilized in the field. In the case where an offensive player bats and the player is not listed on the lineup or bats out of order, the MLB batting out of order rule (Baseball only) and the USA Softball batting out of order rule (Softball only) shall apply.
2. **Substitutions and Injuries** - Substitutions are to be made at the start of the 1/2 inning except in the case of an injured player, in which instance the substitution can be made immediately for the injured player. In the case of an injured offensive player, the substitute player shall be the player who made the last out either in the inning of play or the previous inning if no outs have been recorded. The injured player must sit out at least one inning (the remainder of the 1/2 inning which the player is injured, plus the next 1/2 inning). If the player returns to the game, he/she must return to his/her original position in the batting order. If a player is removed

from the game for disciplinary action or must leave early, the player's batting lineup position is skipped (no out shall be recorded) and the player must remain out for the remainder of the game.

3. **Pitching Changes** - A manager may change pitchers at any point in the game that he/she wishes. The manager may bring a player off the bench to pitch so long as the minimum play rules are not violated.

SECTION III

EJECTIONS / PROTESTS / DISPUTES

1. Any manager, coach, or player ejected from a game must immediately leave the field and dugout area and have no further involvement in the game. The individual ejected may be required to leave the complex by the Director on Duty at the request of the umpire. The plate umpire shall ensure that all ejections are recorded in the official scorebook and reported to the League Office in writing. Any manager, coach, or player ejected from a game may be subject to further disciplinary action by the League Rules Committee. The League Rules Committee will review ejections. The League Rules Committee may request the attendance of any person ejected to appear before the League Rules Committee. The ejected party may be subject to any of the additional penalties/punishments listed below.
2. **Manager/Coach Ejections** - Any manager or coach ejected from a game shall serve a minimum of one game suspension in addition to the game in which the manager was ejected. A one game suspension and/or the imposition of probation *can* be appealed. Suspension of more than one game, dismissal, or expulsion may be appealed by following the procedures listed in "Disciplinary Hearing" below. Any manager who manages multiple teams may not manage/coach in another division until the suspension for the division in which the suspension occurred is served. *The Rules Committee reserves the right to increase the suspension if warranted.*
3. **Player Ejections** - Any player ejected from a game may not re-enter the game in which he/she was ejected. Any additional punishment shall be at the discretion of the League Rules committee. The parent/guardian of the player and the manager shall be notified via e-mail of any additional punishment. Any additional punishment beyond removal from the game in which the player was ejected may be appealed.
4. **Additional Punishments/Penalties** - The ejected party may be subject to any of the following additional penalties/punishments:
 - a. **Probation.** The ejected person will be notified in writing that they have been placed on probation for the remainder of the season or for a specific time period.
 - b. **Suspension.** The offending person is to be advised in writing, including electronic communication, that they have been suspended from all league activity for a

specific number of games or days. Any **player** suspended for one or more games must report to the scorekeeper before the start of the game in which he/she is suspended. If he/she fails to do so, he/she will have to sit out each following game until he/she complies. Any **manager or coach** suspended for one or more games may sit in the stands but may not coach in any form.

- c. **Dismissal.** The offending person is to be advised in writing, including by electronic communication that they have been dismissed from the league for the remainder of the year.
- d. **Expulsion.** The offending person is to be advised in writing, including by electronic communication, that they have been expelled from present and future participation in the league permanently or for a specific number of years.

5. All decisions regarding punishments made by the League Rules Committee are final.

6. Disciplinary Hearing - Any manager suspended for more than one game (not including the game in which he/she was suspended) or player suspended for any number of subsequent games, may appeal the additional punishment to the League Rules Committee. The appeal must be filed with the appropriate League Director or Commissioner within 24 hours of receipt of notification of the imposition of a suspension by the Rules Committee. (Notification shall be deemed received no later than 24 hours after Rules Committee sent the notification.) The appeal shall be in writing. The League Rules Committee will meet to consider any appeal of any punishment no later than 14 days after imposition of the punishment. Until such time as the appeal can be heard, any punishment or penalty will be kept pending the outcome of the appeal.

7. Protests - Protests must be filed at the time of the incident prior to the next pitch, with the umpire, official scorekeeper, and the opposing manager in accordance with official baseball/softball rules. The only exception is if the protest is lodged on the final play of the game, which allows the protesting manager 24 hours to lodge the protest. All protests arising on the field of play must be submitted **IN WRITING**. The form is available on the Hart website. The protest must clearly state the circumstances and the rule being protested. The form shall be submitted to the chairman of the Rules Committee (Executive Vice- President), League Director, or to the Baseball or Softball Commissioner, along with a \$100.00 fee, within 48 hours from the time of the protest. The \$100 fee will not be returned if the protest is denied. Any protest form that is not fully completed shall be deemed invalid. The Rules Committee will meet to consider each protest, when possible, within 14 days after it is received in the prescribed manner.

8. Attendees - The managers involved in the protest will be notified, by the Executive Vice-President or appropriate league director, and may attend the meeting convened to decide their protest, as well as any other person(s) who the committee deems may be involved and could help the committee reach a fair decision.

9. **Playoff Rules Committee** - Three (3) rules committee members shall be present for all playoff games. In the absence of 3 rules committee members, any three league officials (directors or adult umpires) that have no children in that division shall rule on the protest. They shall decide on protests. Protests during the playoffs will be decided immediately and cannot be appealed. The appropriate Rule Book, either printed or electronic, must be used to rule on the protest.
10. **Protest Records** - All protest records shall be maintained by the Executive Vice-President and submitted to the League Secretary for incorporation into the league records.

SECTION IV

SCOREKEEPER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. All scorekeepers working baseball/softball games in the score booth will comply with PONY rule 14a-c. **(Baseball and Softball)** which states that Scorekeepers shall not influence the game by cheering for or coaching any player, or pointing out infractions, with the exceptions noted in 1.a. below, unless asked by the umpires or managers. Managers are responsible for bringing any infractions to the umpire's attention. **PENALTY:** The umpire may eject the offending scorekeeper after a warning.
 - a. Baseball/Softball scorekeepers will point out the following infractions (if applicable), to the umpires and managers, without the game being subject to protest.
 - i. Pitch count and/or inning limit when it is reached as defined for each division.
 - ii. Last batter in leagues where applicable.
 - iii. Any illegal substitution (including improper batting order).
 - iv. Third out of the inning.
 - v. Scorekeepers will inform the umpire, managers, and the League's Official Scorekeeper of any violation of the league's minimum play requirements. This condition will be corrected immediately and could subject the offending party to additional sanctions as deemed necessary by the League Rules Committee.

BASEBALL RULES OF PLAY

Note: All PONY rules are to be followed on the effective date of the rule regardless of whether that date falls before or during the season. In the event of a conflict between the following rules and PONY rules these league rules will take precedence. Any situation not covered by these rules will defer to the OFFICIAL PONY BASEBALL RULE BOOK for the current year or the OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULE BOOK for the current year. Any situation not covered by any of these rules will be handled by the League Rules Committee and or the Board of Directors.

SECTION I

PREGAME

- 1. Game Supervision (All Divisions except Shetland)** – Once the Umpire in Charge (the plate umpire) calls the managers to the plate for the pre-game meeting, only three adults (team manager and two coaches) will be allowed in the dugout or on the field of play. Two adults at a time will be allowed on the field of play (as base coaches) during the course of a game, except during pre-game warm-up and between innings when all three may be present on the field of play. Team managers are responsible for all adults preparing the field prior to each game and after. Exception: For Pinto - During coach pitch, an additional coach may be on the field as a “pitcher.”
- 2. Managers/Coaches Attire** – During regular league games and playoffs all managers and coaches should be attired in clothing appropriate to baseball or softball and have their badges displayed. The league recommends that managers wear team colors.
- 3. Lineup Sheet** - All rostered players must appear on the game lineup sheet even if they are not present for the game. Any absent player must be reported by his manager to the official scorekeeper, the Umpire in Charge, and the opposing manager prior to the start of the game. A manager who fails to report an absent player to the official scorekeeper will be subject to a one game suspension. Any subsequent infraction of this rule may result in the manager being removed from the team for the remainder of the season.
- 4. Player Safety**-Any player with a cast or boot, or any other temporary medical device prescribed by a medical doctor will not be able to play until they are able to participate without the temporary medical apparatus. This will allow the player ample time to completely heal before returning to the field of play.

SECTION II

EQUIPMENT

1. **Batting Helmets** – Every offensive player who comes to bat will be required to wear a NOCSCE approved batting helmet. Anyone under the age of 18, (other than a player(s) who enters the field for any reason must also wear an approved batting helmet. Batting helmets shall be free of cracks and no decal other than the player's name, number, team name or logo shall be added to the protective headgear. No custom-painted helmets shall be permitted on the field of play. Factory painted helmets are permitted. This also applies to catcher's headgear. Any protective headgear in violation of this rule shall be removed from the field of play including the team dugouts. It is strongly recommended that adults, when positioned in the coach's box, wear protective headgear.
2. **Catcher's Safety Equipment** - Every player, while playing the position of catcher (during games and practices) must wear the catcher's protective gear provided by the league or personal equipment bearing the NOCSAE approval label at all times. As appropriate, they must wear a protective cup during play and at practices. Per the PONY rules: "Catchers are required to wear proper protective equipment including a mask with throat guard (an added dangling throat guard is optional), chest protector, shin guards, athletic supporter with cup, and NOCSAE approved headgear which gives protection to the top of the head and to both ears while catching behind plate. Any person under the age of 18, serving as a catcher to warm up a pitcher, shall wear a mask, whether the pitcher is warming up from the mound, in the bullpen, or elsewhere.
3. **Cleats** - Steel cleats shall NOT be permitted on the Shetland, Pinto, Mustang, Bronco and Pony fields. Metal cleats are allowed on the Colt field.
4. Hart Baseball will now allow rec players to use either the USA or USSSA bats. However, for PONY Tournament Play, only USA bats will be allowed as per PONY rules.
 - a. USSSA Bat Rules: Must have the 1.15 BPF USSSA stamp on the taper OR have the Certified .50 BBCOR stamp (-3) OR be a Wood Bat
 - b. Barrel diameter cannot exceed 2 3/4"
 - c. All must be manufactured by an approved USSSA bat manufacturer*

SECTION III

GAME LENGTH

1. **Regulation / Complete Game** - A Regulation Game is the total number of innings of scheduled play per game in each division if time allows. A Complete Game is the number of innings required to be played for the result to be considered "official." However, any game that ends due to time limit shall be an official game regardless of the number of innings played. A new inning begins at the conclusion of the third out of the previous inning.

2. The number of innings required for a complete/regulation game shall be:

Baseball Complete/Regulation Game Table

Division	Complete Game	Regulation Game
Pinto	4	6
Mustang	4	6
Bronco	5	7
Pony	5	7
Colt/Palomino	5	7

3. Game time limits:
- a. Shetland Spirit - 60-minute drop dead
 - b. Shetland 5U - 75-minute drop dead
 - c. Shetland 6U - 90-minute drop dead
- d. Pinto, Mustang, Bronco, Pony, and Colt 60/90 - In order to have all games the same, no new inning shall commence after 1 hour and 45 minutes and must complete the inning for all games. The plate umpire will control the official time.
4. **Incomplete Game** - Any game not reaching complete game status as described above, for any reason (other than exceeding the time limit), shall be considered an incomplete game. An incomplete game may be completed at a future date at the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner.
5. **Suspended Game** - If a game having reached complete game status is called for any reason in an incomplete inning, the reported score shall be the score at the last complete inning UNLESS the score is tied at the time the game is called, or the visiting team took the lead in its half of the incomplete inning. In either case the game shall be considered a suspended game. A suspended game may be completed at a future date at the discretion of the Baseball Commissioner. A suspended game **must** be completed if the teams play again during the regular season. A suspended game not completed by the end of the season shall constitute a tie in the standings.
6. **Resuming Suspended/Incomplete Games** - Suspended or Incomplete games resume from the point of suspension, as if the suspension never occurred. All roster assignments and pitching

restrictions apply as if the game had not been suspended except that a player absent for the original game shall be added to the end of the original lineup and is eligible to play in the continuation game.

7. **Cancelled Games** - Games cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances will be rescheduled at the discretion of the Commissioner(s). Every effort will be made to reschedule cancelled games but cannot be guaranteed.
8. **Mid-Season** - April 1st will mark the “second half” of the season for all baseball games even if the game is a rescheduled game. This date will be used for all “second half” of the season division rules.
9. **Mercy Rules –Colt, Pony, Bronco**
 - a. 15 after 3 ½ innings (if the home team is winning or 5 innings if the visiting team is winning.
 - b. 10 after 4 ½ innings (if the home team is winning or 5 innings if the visiting team is winning.
- 9A. **Mustang and Pinto (American & National)**
 - a. 15 after 2 ½ innings (if the home team is winning or 4 innings if the visiting team is winning.
 - b. 10 after 3 ½ innings (if the home team is winning or 4 innings if the visiting team is winning.

SECTION IV

FARM TEAMS

1. **Farm Club Assignments** - Each team (except in Shetland) shall be assigned one or more farm teams. Pinto, Mustang, Bronco, Pony, National League teams shall have their farm clubs assigned from their respective American League teams. Pinto American, Mustang American, Bronco American, and Pony American Leagues shall have their farm clubs assigned from the opposite division. Colt/Palomino shall share out-fielders whenever there are less than nine (9) players on any team for a game. The team that is shorthanded will bat a line-up of the players they have in attendance. Farm teams will not be assigned to another team that is the same name (i.e., Pinto Dodgers will not be a farm team for Mustang Dodgers)
2. **Substitute Player Requests** - A manager who needs a player from his/her farm team will request a list of three players names from the farm team manager that are available for loan if the manager needs one player and a list of four names if the manager needs two players. Farm team players must wear the uniform of the team by which he/she was drafted. Farm players need to go through the league director.
3. **Players Lost for the Season** - If a player is lost for the entire season on any team, the manager must notify the league director within 24 hours and a player will be placed on the team from the waiting list. Players added from the waiting list after the midpoint of the season are not

eligible to play in League playoffs or PONY sanctioned tournaments. Players lost on national league teams are not replaced with players from the waiting list unless approved by the Rules Committee.

4. **Maximum Games** – The same farm team player may not be utilized by the same team for more than two games during the season.
5. **Last Minute Shortages** - When a team is unable to find last minute players and the opposing team offers their team players to avoid a forfeit and allow the game to play, upon approval of both managers in the presence of the umpire, the game shall be considered a legal game.
6. **Farm Player Usage** - Farm players must bat at the end of the batting order and may only play the outfield positions. Rostered players arriving after the start of the game are inserted in the batting order following the farm players.
7. **Penalties** - Failure to follow these farm team substitution rules will result in a one game suspension of the manager and/or forfeit of the game.
8. **Playoff Usage** - The above rules apply for playoffs except in the event that the farm club is also in the league playoffs. In this case the next alphabetical team, not in the playoffs, shall be the designated farm club. This shall be in effect for the entire playoffs even should the original farm club be eliminated from playoffs.

SECTION V

LEAGUE CHAMPION / PLAYOFFS

1. **Length of Season** - The season shall consist of a minimum of 17 games including playoffs, weather/field conditions permitting.
2. **Determination of League Champion:**
 - a. **Playoff Format** - In all divisions except Shetland and Colt, (playoffs in Colt is discretionary with the Baseball Commissioner) there will be playoffs at the end of the season. All teams will qualify for the playoffs in divisions that have playoffs. Unless modified by the Commissioner and League Director, the format will be a double elimination, using the criteria listed below. When the league format and qualification criteria are modified the modified format and qualification criteria will be submitted to the managers prior to the first game and supersede the published rules. Qualifications for the playoffs are as follows:
 - b. **Seeding** - Seeding for the playoffs will be as follows in order of precedence:
 - i. Seeding will be determined by the website standings.
 - ii. In the event of a tie for the season record among teams, then head-to-head games will be used for seeding (if applicable).

- iii. If a tie still exists after the application of Rule 1 & 2 above, then a coin flip will determine seeding.
- c. **Pitching Rules** - All regular season pitching rules shall remain in effect including the 36-hour rest rule. *The pitch count supersedes the sit out rule for all pitchers.*
- d. **Farm Clubs** - The farming procedure will be strictly enforced.
- e. **Home Team** - The Home team will be the highest ranked seed for all playoff games in both the “Winners Bracket” and the “Loser’s Bracket.” The home team shall occupy the third-base dugout.
- f. **Time Limits** – Time limits shall be the same as those set for the regular season except that a winner must be determined. All time limits are subject to modification in order to determine a winner without continuing the game to a later date. In the event a game must be suspended due to weather, curfew, or any other reason it will be rescheduled for completion at the earliest possible time by the appropriate Commissioner. There shall be no time limits for championship playoff games, which will be played to completion.
- g. **Mercy Rule** – Will be as per Section III, Game Length, #9 Mercy Rules.
- h. **Courtesy Runner** - A courtesy runner (player making the last out) for the catcher of the previous inning, if on base with two outs, may be used to help speed up the game without a substitution being recorded.
- i. **Forfeiture** - A game will be considered a forfeit if a minimum of 8 players on the team does not arrive 15 minutes after the scheduled start time.

SECTION VI

FALL LEAGUE RULES

Overview - The fall program will be instructional. League standings will not be maintained, and no trophies will be awarded. The league will provide uniform shirts, hats, and catcher's gear. Players will provide their own pants, socks, helmets, belts, bats, or any other equipment required. There is no Spirit Division in the Fall Program. Generally, the Spring league rules will be followed. However, to ensure the instructional purpose of the fall program, the following exceptions and changes will be in effect:

1. **Drafting Coaches’ Children** – In each league, if a majority of the managers agree, each team can select one coach per team. The coaches’ child shall be drafted in the round agreed upon by a majority of the managers. In the event of a tie the league director shall place the child in the appropriate round.

2. **Hat Picks** - Hat picks that have scheduling conflicts with a team's designated practice time (fall league only) will be put back in the hat and another player will be drawn.
3. **Pitchers** - To encourage development of pitchers, players will be allowed to pitch a maximum of two innings in Pinto and Mustang, a maximum of three innings in Bronco and Pony, and a maximum of four innings in Colt., A pitcher may not return to the mound once removed, but a player may be brought off the bench to pitch so long as the minimum play rules are followed.
4. **Minimum Play All Divisions** - No player may sit out consecutive innings, and no player may sit out more than 2 innings per game. Each player must have played a minimum of two innings at any infield position by the end of the 5th inning. At least one of these innings must be completed prior to the third inning. Exceptions to this rule may be made by parental request only, in writing, to the appropriate League Director.
5. **Scorebooks** - There will be no "official" scorebooks.
6. **Protests** - There will be no protests.
7. **Player Shortage** - There will be no "farm teams". Teams with less than nine players will borrow a player (or players) from the opposing team (if available) for the game. The last batter due up will play defense for the opposing team in the forthcoming inning and must play an outfield position.
8. **Incomplete/Cancelled Games** - Incomplete games will not be made up at a later date. Games canceled due to rain or other reasons will be rescheduled if possible.
9. **Umpires** - The league will arrange for the home-plate umpire, who will be paid by each team by splitting the game fees in half.
10. **Practices** - One practice slot per team per week will be allotted on the league playing fields. The League Director(s) will post a practice schedule for their division with approval of the Commissioner(s). Gates to the complex will be opened at 4:00 PM. Practices shall not begin prior to this time. Practices shall conclude no later than 9:15 PM. All field lights will be shut off promptly at 9:30 PM and the complex will be locked up. The team manager is responsible for seeing that the field is left in proper condition after practices (including dragging and raking of field, cleaning up trash, etc.) in accordance with the League Rules. A minimum of one team practice per week, held by the manager, is mandatory. This does not include practice games.
11. **Rules Precedence** - Unless otherwise specified in other fall league rules, American League rules shall apply.
12. **Number of Games** - The Fall season will usually consist of eight (8) games.
13. **Game Times** - Every game shall drop dead 2 hours after scheduled start time.

14. Mustang - There shall be a 5 run per half inning maximum. The umpire shall be responsible for keeping track of the number of runs.

15. Shetland - Shetland 5/6 will use a batting tee for the first half of the season and switch to the pitching machine for the second half.

APPENDIX A1

SHETLAND DIVISION

1. **Team Constitution** – A team shall consist of a maximum of fourteen (14) players.
2. **Division Composition** – The Shetland Division will be divided into three leagues;
 - a. Shetland 6U, Shetland 5U, and Spirit (4U).
 - b. The player's date of birth will designate which division they will participate in during the registration process.
 - c. There must be enough 4-year-olds registered to form four teams for there to be a Spirit division. If there are not enough players, then the 4-year-olds will have the option of playing Shetland 5U.
3. **The Season**
 - a. Each Shetland League will play a limited schedule of 10 to 14 games as determined by the Commissioner.
 - b. There will be no scores or standings kept for 4U and 5U Shetland leagues.
 - c. Spring Break will mark the end of the 1st Half of play and the beginning of the 2nd Half of play. All games played after Spring Break must be played under the 2nd half rules if applicable.
4. **Tournament Teams**
 - a. Tournament Team managers will be selected by the Shetland Directors and Baseball Commissioner with approval by the Rules Committee.
 - b. Eligible players must complete the Hart Letter of Intent and be selected unanimously by all Shetland managers in attendance at the tournament team selection meeting scheduled by the Commissioner.
5. **Team Formation**
 - a. There will be no tryouts or drafts for any Shetland division.
 - b. The Shetland Director will geographically form teams.
 - c. 5U players may play in the 6U division if they have a sibling in the 6U division.
6. **Shetland 6U**
 - a. **Umpires and Scorekeeping**
 - i. No umpires will be used for Shetland games.

- ii. Umpiring and scorekeeping duties will be handled by a Live Scanned coach or parent from one of the teams during each game.
- iii. Umpiring duties are limited to determining if a base runner has passed the half-way point between bases once play has been stopped.
- iv. Scorekeeping is limited to counting the number of runs scored each inning.

b. The Game

- i. Games shall be up to five (5) innings and may end in a tie.
- ii. There will be a time limit of ninety (90) minutes, drop dead.
- iii. Maximum of five (5) runs scored per half inning or (3) three outs, whichever comes first.
- iv. A pitching machine must be used for the entire season.

c. The Pitcher

- i. Coaches or managers shall operate the pitching machine **38** feet from the point of home plate. **Setting must be set to: Power lever = 2; Micro adjust = 3; Release block = 4**
- ii. The player fielding the pitcher's position shall take a position five (5) feet to the rear of the pitching machine and be on the left or right side of the coach utilizing the pitching machine.
- iii. If a batted ball strikes the coach pitcher, the ball is dead, the pitch counts, and no runners shall advance.
- iv. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and remains in fair territory, the ball is in play.
- v. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine and goes into foul territory, the ball is dead, the batter is awarded first base, and all runners advance one base.
- vi. The coach who is operating the pitching machine shall not give coaching instructions to batters after they hit the ball or to base runners. They may not interfere in any way with the defensive players.

d. The Batter

- i. All players listed on the roster and present will bat during the first half of the season. Once the batting order is submitted to the other team it will not be changed, except for injury or ejection.
- ii. Batters are not permitted to bunt or swing easily at the ball. **Penalty** - The batter shall be called back to the plate, the swing is foul strike, the ball is dead, and no runners may advance.
- iii. A ten-foot arc will be inscribed in front of the home plate, from the first and third base lines and any batted ball, which does not travel beyond that line, will be considered a foul strike.
- iv. For the first half of the season, if the batter fails to hit a fair ball after a maximum of four (4) pitches from the pitching machine they will be given up to three (3) swings at the ball off the tee. If a ball has not been put into play after the 3 swings off the tee, the batter is out.
- v. For the second half of the season, the batter will be given 6 pitches off of the machine. No coach pitch. After the 6 pitches, if the ball has not been hit fairly,

the batter will be declared out. An inning can end at 3 outs without all of the players in the lineup batting.

- vi. Each manager may designate any number of his or her players as “tee only” during the 1st half of the season to help save time. During the 2nd half each player must attempt to hit from the machine.
- vii. A ball in play from the tee can only result in a single and base runners may only advance one base unless put out by the defense prior to reaching the next base (See Shetland 5 rules for hitting off the tee).
- viii. Batting helmets will be worn when batting, whether hitting from a tee, machine, or hitting a pitched ball.
- ix. There is no dropped third strike rule.

e. Base Runners

- i. Runners are not permitted to steal or lead off and remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit. **Penalty** - Runner is out.
- ii. On a batted ball, runners may advance until an infielder has control of the ball between the bases or at a base and holds the ball up and request time unless ball was hit from the tee. Once the ball becomes dead and in the judgment of the umpire, if the runner has not gone beyond the halfway point between the bases, the runner will be required to return to the base in which they are coming from.
- iii. Scoring from third: Only on a batted ball or continuation of play of a batted ball.
- iv. There is no infield fly rule.

f. Defense

- i. A batted ball becomes dead when an infielder is inside of the baseline or at a base, has possession of the ball, and holds the ball over their head.
- ii. Each half-inning will be complete after three (3) outs, or five (5) runs have scored.
- iii. Free defensive substitutions
- iv. All players listed on the roster and present will play defense each inning.
 - 1. Each player may play a maximum of 2 innings at any given position per game (consecutively or staggered). In addition, each player will play a minimum of 2 innings in the infield per game before the 4th inning.
 - 2. A maximum of 6 players may be stationed in the infield (including the catcher & pitcher). Extra infielders are to be stationed between the first and second base positions, and between shortstop and second base. No player may be closer to the batter than the pitcher.
 - 3. Outfielders must be stationed at least 15 feet behind the baseline when the ball is pitched.
 - 4. Two defensive coaches are allowed on the playing field. They must remain along the fair/foul lines.

7. Shetland 5U

a. The Game

- i. Games shall be up to five (5) innings. No score is kept.

- ii. There will be a time limit of 75 minutes drop dead.
- iii. An inning will be completed when the offensive team has batted completely through its lineup or batted an equal number of batters as the opposing team (whichever is higher). When the last batter rule is in effect, there will be 2 outs assumed once the ball is put in play. The ball in control of any defensive player while touching home plate will be considered a force out (no tag required). Of course, an out may be obtained in any normal manner as well.
- iv. Example: If team "A" has twelve (12) players in their lineup, and team "B" has ten (10) players in their lineup, then team "B" will bat their ten (10) players plus the first two (2) batters to equal twelve (12). The next inning team "B" would begin with their third batter and bat through to their fourth batter (if necessary), and so on.

b. The Pitcher

- i. No player may pitch.
- ii. Coaches or managers pitching to their players or using a pitching machine, must do so at least 30 feet from the point of home plate.
- iii. The player fielding the pitcher's position shall take a position five (5) feet to the rear of the pitching coach and be on the left or right side of the coach pitching.
- iv. If a batted ball strikes the coach pitcher, the ball is dead, the pitch counts, and no runners shall advance.
- v. The coach who is pitching shall not give coaching instructions to batters after they hit the ball or to base runners. They may not in any way interfere with the defensive players.
- vi. When the batters are hitting from the tee, the player assigned to the position of "pitcher" shall be at least as far away from the plate as the thirty-five (35) foot pitching plate while a batter is hitting from the tee.

c. The Batter

- i. During the first half of the season each batter will be given a maximum of five (5) pitches. If a ball has not been put into play after the 5th pitch, the batter will receive three (3) swings at the ball off the tee. If a ball has not been put into play after the 3 swings off the tee, the batter will be declared out.
- ii. For the second half of the season the batter will be given 6 pitches off of the machine. No coach pitch. After the 6 pitches, if the ball has not been hit fairly, the batter will be declared out. An inning can end at 3 outs without all of the players in the lineup batting.
- iii. Rules for hitting off the tee:
 - 1. No bunting, batter must take a full swing.
 - 2. Ball must go beyond a ten (10) foot arc between first and third bases, from home plate, or it will be called a foul ball.
 - 3. The batter must hit the ball and not the tee. If the batter hits the tee and not the ball, it will be called a foul ball. If the bat hits both the ball and the tee, it is a legal hit.
 - 4. Any hit ball, whether intentional or not, is in play.

5. Up to two (2) practice swings will be permitted.
6. Batting helmets will be worn when batting, whether hitting from a tee or hitting a pitched ball.

d. Base Runners

- i. Runners are not permitted to steal or lead off and remain in contact with the base until the ball is hit.
- ii. Runners are allowed to advance only one base per batter unless the batted ball has been hit over the outfielder's heads.
- iii. Base runners that are tagged out or forced out by the defense may remain on the corresponding base during the 1st half of the season. During the 2nd half of the season base runners that are tagged out or forced out by the defense will be removed from the bases.

e. Defense

- i. Free defensive substitutions
- ii. All players listed on the roster and present will play defense each inning.
- iii. Each player may play a maximum of 2 innings at any given position per game. In addition, each player will play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield per game before the 2nd inning.
- iv. A maximum of 8 players may be stationed in the infield (including the catcher & pitcher). Extra infielders are to be stationed between the first and second base positions, and between shortstop and second bases. No player may be closer to the batter than the pitcher.
- v. Outfielders must be stationed at least 15 feet behind the baseline when the ball is pitched.
- vi. Two Defensive coaches are allowed on the playing field, one to direct the players on the infield and one to direct the players in the outfield.

8. Shetland Spirit

- a. Team Formation - Teams will be formed geographically by the Shetland Director.
- b. The Game
 - i. Spirit players will always hit using the tee. There will be no coach pitching.
 - ii. Base runners tagged out or forced out by the defense will be allowed to remain on the bases.
 - iii. All other rules of play are the same as Shetland 5U.
 - iv. Game time is 60 minutes drop dead time limit.

APPENDIX A2

PINTO DIVISION

1. Rules

- a. The bases shall be 60 feet.
- b. The pitching distance shall be 40 feet.

2. Division Composition

- a. The Pinto division will consist of two leagues named National and American.
- b. The National League will consist of six (6) to ten (10) teams and the number of American League will be determined by division registration numbers.

3. The Game

- a. A game shall consist of six innings.
- b. If a team is leading its opponent by at least ten (10) runs after four (4) or more complete innings have been played, or after 3-1/2 innings if the home team has a ten-run lead at the end of its third inning, or before the completion of its fourth (4th) inning, the game shall be terminated and the team in front declared the winner.
- c. **In the American League only** - An inning will be completed when: three outs have been recorded; or after the offensive team has batted completely through their lineup or an equal number of batters as the opposing team, whichever is greater. The last batter cannot walk, but if a pitch hits the batter, all runners and the batter are awarded two (2) bases whether forced or not. When the last batter rule is in effect, there will be two (2) outs assumed; once the ball is put into play and the ball is in control of any defensive player while touching home plate, it will be considered a force out (no tag required). Of course, an out may be obtained in any normal manner as well. **Exception:** In the 6th inning, there is no limit to the number of batters.
- d. All players must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield during each game by the end of the **3rd** inning. They must play on the infield again by the end of the 5th inning. In American league only a parent may request in writing to the league director to play in the outfield only for the player's safety.
- e. Extra innings are possible if the 6th inning ends prior to 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.
- f. The last Pinto game scheduled on any day on any field shall not continue past 9:30pm.

4. The Pitcher

- a. Pinto (National & American)
 - i. Any player may pitch, but not to exceed two (2) innings per game (including a continuation game) or 45 pitches per day. One pitch shall constitute one inning pitched. After a pitcher reaches the limit of 45 pitches, he/she may continue until the current batter is disposed.
- b. There shall be no weekly pitching restrictions; however, the 40-hour rest rule applies.
- c. No balks shall be called. However, the umpire may inform the pitcher if the delivery is deceptive.
- d. If a defensive manager or coach goes on to the playing field to talk to any player or players, twice in a half inning while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire. Once the umpire is ready to place the ball in play and the defensive manager is still talking to any player, the umpire will charge a trip to the defense.

5. Batter

- a. Pinto American - No walks permitted. After ball four, the batter assumes strike count and the offensive manager or coach will pitch to the batter.
- b. The batter shall be declared out after failing to hit a fair ball after four pitches are delivered by a coach-pitcher. The batter is out if there are three strikes before the fourth coach pitch. Missed swings are counted as strikes, as are foul balls and foul tips. There shall be **NO**-called strikes during coach pitch. The batter is not out on a foul ball or a foul tip unless it is also the fourth pitch.
 - i. In the event the batter hits a fair ball from coach-pitch, the play will proceed until either: 1) the third out of the inning, 2) the umpire has granted time out, or 3) the batter and each runner have legally advanced one base. In the event the batter has reached a base other than first, he/she will be required to return to first base. All base runners may only advance to one base, whether forced or not. If all base runners legally acquire one base after a fair-batted ball during coach-pitch, then the ball is dead and there is no further play on the runner(s). However, in the event this is the last batter of the inning, the baserunners shall be allowed to continue in accordance with standard rules for last batter. The batter may only advance to first base.
 - ii. In the event the batter is hit by coach pitched ball, the ball is dead, the batter will not advance to first base and if the pitch is the fourth pitch, the batter is out. If the coach pitcher hits a second batter in the same game, the coach pitcher is removed from pitching for the remainder of the game. He is not ejected for the action.
- c. The dropped third strike rule will not apply. (National & American)
- d. Bunting is not allowed in the American League. Bunting is allowed in Pinto National during the second half of the season.
- e. There is no infield fly rule in the American League. For Pinto National, the infield fly rule is in effect during the second half of the season.
- f. Batting helmets equipped with protective face masks are required. C-Flap helmet are now approved per PONY guidelines (National & American)

6. Base Runners

- a. In the American League base stealing shall not be permitted.
 - i. A base runner may leave the base once the ball **crosses** home plate. If the base runner leaves before that point, the umpire shall issue a warning. Subsequent infractions will result in the runner being called out.
 - ii. The ball is dead until the batter hits it, and the base runner may not advance until that point. No play may be made on a baserunner until the ball is put in play by the batter.
 - iii. Except for coach pitch, once a ball is put in play baserunners and batter may advance until the forward base runner's advancement has been stopped, and all following runners have advanced as far as they are allowed, and a play is not in progress on him or another base runner.
 - iv. Exception for Overthrow at First Base Only:
The batter-runner can only advance to a maximum of 3rd base when an over throw has been committed by an infielder from the infield only on a play at first

base. The base runners starting on the bases can advance home during the play and are at jeopardy of being put out. If the batter-runner scores during the play, he will be sent back to third base.

- b. Base runners shall not intentionally remove protective helmets while advancing between bases. **Penalty** - runner is out.
- c. The only offensive coaches allowed on the field shall be the base runner's coaches in the designated coaching boxes on the first and third base lines.
- d. In the National League, stealing will be governed by the latest version of PONY's Pinto Tournament Rules. The only exceptions are:
 - i. On an instance of a walk, the ball becomes dead.
 - ii. No leading off, the runner must remain in contact with the base until the ball **crosses** home plate. **Penalty** - Runner is out and the ball is a delayed dead ball. If the batter hits the pitch and/or an out is made on the batter, including a strikeout, that out will stand in addition to the violation by the runner.
- e. The runner is out when -
 - i. The runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.

7. Time Limits

- a. For all scheduled Pinto games, no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes for ALL games. ***If the inning has started, complete the inning.***

APPENDIX A3

MUSTANG DIVISION

1. Rules

- a. Bases shall be 60 feet.
- b. Pitching Distance shall be 46 feet.

2. Division Composition

- a. The Mustang Division will consist of two leagues called the National and the American League.
- b. The National League will consist of two divisions. Division A will consist of drafted teams, from six (6), or eight (8) teams. Division B will consist of pre-drafted teams. The number of teams in each division will depend on interest and registration numbers.
- c. Divisions may play intra-league, as long as both managers agree.
- d. Divisions – Standings- Playoffs- Tournaments will be handled separately. Each division will have their own post season.
- e. All players must register for Hart Baseball's Mustang Division.

- f. The American League will make up the remaining players.

3. Defensive players

- a. All players must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield during each game by the end of the 3rd inning. In American league only a parent may request in writing to the league director to play in the outfield only for the player's safety.

4. Innings

- a. In the American League only, an inning will be completed when: Three outs have been recorded; or after the offensive team has batted completely through their lineup or an equal number of batters as the opposing team, whichever is greater. If the last batter is hit by a pitch or walked, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded two bases, whether forced or not. When the last batter rule is in effect, there will be two (2) outs assumed; once the ball is put into play and the ball is in control of any defensive player while touching home plate, it will be considered a force out (no tag required). An out may be obtained in any normal manner as well.
- b. Mustang American Only: In the **6th inning**, there is no limit to the number of batters.

5. Pitchers

- a. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 50 pitches per day or three innings per game, whichever comes first. After the pitcher reaches either limit, he/she may pitch to the current batter until the at-bat is complete.
- b. There shall be no weekly pitching restrictions; however, the 40-hour rest rule applies.
- c. If a manager or coach goes on to the playing field to talk to any player or players, more than once in a half inning while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire. Once the umpire is ready to place the ball in play and the defensive manager is still talking to any player, the umpire will charge a trip to the defense.
- d. In Mustang American, there will be no dropped third strike for the first half of the season.

6. Balks

- a. Balks shall be called in both American and National Leagues. Runners will advance.

7. Baserunners

- a. The runner is out when -
- b. The runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.
- c. In Mustang American only (first half of the season) – third base is frozen and no stealing home on a passed ball is permitted. If the runner is put out by the actions

of the defense, the runner is out. If the runner is safe at home, he will be returned to third base and any runners will be returned to their last legally acquired base if forced by the runner's return to third. ***If the catcher over throws to any base except the pitcher for the purposes of making a play, the runners may advance at their own peril. If the over throw is to the pitcher, third base is frozen.***

8. Time Limits

- a. For all scheduled Mustang games, no new inning shall begin 1 hour and 45 minutes for ALL games. ***If the inning has started, complete the inning.***
- b. Extra innings are possible if the 6th inning ends prior to 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.

APPENDIX A4

BRONCO DIVISION

1. Rules

- a. Bases shall be **70 feet**.
- b. Pitching Distance shall be 50 feet.

2. Division Composition

- a. The division may consist of two leagues and be named National and American, or all players may be placed into a single Bronco League to be determined by the Commissioner and League Director(s) depending on registration numbers.
- b. If used, the National League will consist of six (6), or eight (8) teams while the American League will comprise the remaining players.

3. The Game

- a. For Bronco American or a single Bronco League, an inning will be completed when: Three outs have been recorded; or after the offensive team has batted completely through their lineup or an equal number of batters as the opposing team, whichever is greater. If the last batter is hit by a pitch or walked, the batter is awarded first base and all runners are awarded two bases, whether forced or not. When the last batter rule is in effect, there will be two (2) outs assumed; once the ball is put into play and the ball is in control of any defensive player while touching home plate, it will be considered a force out (no tag required). Of course, an out may be obtained in any normal manner as well. **EXAMPLE:** If team (A) has 12 players in their lineup and team (B) has 10 players in their lineup, then team (B) will bat their 10 players plus the first two batters to equal twelve. The next inning team (B) would begin with their third batter and bat through their fourth batter (if necessary), and so on... In the 7th inning, there is no limit to the number of batters.

4. Defensive players

- a. All players must play a minimum of 1 inning in the infield during each game by the end of the 5th inning. A parent may request in writing to the league director to play in the outfield only for the player's safety.

5. Baserunners

- a. The runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.
- 6. Balks**
- a. Balks shall be called in both American and National Leagues. Runners will advance.
- 7. Pitching**
- a. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 65 pitches per day or 4 innings per game, whichever comes first. After the pitcher reaches this limit, he/she may pitch to the current batter until the at-bat is complete.
 - b. If a manager or coach goes on to the playing field to talk to any player or players, more than once in a half inning while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire. Once the umpire is ready to place the ball in play and the defensive manager is still talking to any player, the umpire will charge a trip to the defense.
 - c. There shall be no weekly pitching restrictions; however, the 40-hour rest rule applies.
- 8. Time Limits**
- a. For all scheduled Bronco games, no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes for ALL games. ***If the inning has started, complete the inning.***
 - b. Extra innings are possible if the 7th inning ends prior to 1 hour and 45 minutes.

APPENDIX A5

PONY DIVISION

- 1. Rules**
- a. Bases shall be 80 feet.
 - b. Pitching Distance Shall be 54 feet.
- 2. League Composition**
- a. The division may consist of two leagues and be named National and American, or all players may be placed into a single Pony League to be determined by the Commissioner and League Director(s) depending on registration numbers.
 - b. If used, the National League will consist of four (4), six (6), or eight (8) teams while the American League will consist of the remaining players.
- 3. Pitching**
- a. Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 75 pitches per day or 5 innings per game (including a continuation of a suspended game). After the pitcher reaches this limit, he/she may pitch to the current batter until the batter is disposed.

- b. If a manager or coach goes on to the playing field to talk to any player or players, more than once in a half inning while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire. Once the umpire is ready to place the ball in play and the defensive manager is still talking to any player, the umpire will charge a trip to the defense.
- c. There shall be no weekly pitching restrictions; however, the 40-hour rest rule applies.

4. Balks

- a. Balks shall be called in both American and National Leagues. Runners will advance.
- b.

5. Baserunners

- a. The runner is out when -
 - i. The runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.
 - ii.

6. Time Limits

- a. For all scheduled Pony games, no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes for ALL games. ***If the inning has started, complete the inning.***
- b. Extra innings are possible if the 7th inning ends prior to 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.

APPENDIX A6

COLT/PONY 60-90 DIVISION

1. Rules

- a. The bases shall be 90 feet.
- b. The pitching distance shall be 60 feet.
- c. Colt Division consists of players whose league ages are 15 through 18.
- d. Pony 60-90 Division - Age determination shall be per PONY baseball (April 30th cutoff date). Players may play up but not down and may only participate in one team per division. The Pony 60-90 Division consists of players whose league ages are 13 and 14. The Hart PONY Baseball League may schedule games between Colt and Pony 60-90 teams to give the 60-90 players more playing time in preparation for future high school baseball participation.
- e. There will be a 10-run mercy rule in the Colt/Pony 60-90 Division.

2. Division Composition

- a. The Colt Division will consist of a single Colt League and may play other leagues as determined by the Commissioner(s) and League Director depending on registration numbers.

3. Pitching

- a. Colt - Pitchers may pitch a maximum of 80 pitches per day. After the pitcher reaches this limit, he/she may pitch to the current batter until the batter is disposed.
- b. Pony 60-90 - A Pony 60-90 League pitcher is allowed to pitch in not more than seven innings in one calendar day. Pitchers who pitch in more than one game on the same calendar day may pitch any combination of innings in those games provided they do not pitch in more than seven innings on that calendar day.
- c. If a manager or coach goes on to the playing field to talk to any player or players, more than once in a half inning while the same player is pitching, a pitching change shall be made. The only exception to this rule is in case of injury, or if time is called by the opposing team or by an umpire. Once the umpire is ready to place the ball in play and the defensive manager is still talking to any player, the umpire will charge a trip to the defense.
- d. Each out constitutes 1/3 of an inning for pitching purposes (just like Major league baseball) and this criterion shall be used to determine the number of innings pitched for each pitcher. Any pitcher who pitches in 4 or more innings (12 outs or more) shall require 40 hours of rest prior to his/her next pitching assignment.
- e. There shall be no weekly pitching restrictions, However, the 40-hour rest rule applies.

4. Batter

- a. Pony 60-90 only - Team managers have the option of using free substitution or a batting line-up.

5. Baserunners

- a. The runner is out when -
 - i. The runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.

6. Time Limits

- a. For all scheduled Pony 60-90 and Colt games, no new inning shall begin after 1 hour and 45 minutes for ALL games. *If the inning has started, complete the inning.*
- b. Extra innings are possible if the 7th inning ends prior to 1 hour and 45 minutes of play.

7. Pony 60-90

- a. Field care and maintenance is the responsibility of the respective teams per Wm. S. Hart League rules.

- b. All teams will be required to supply their own uniforms. The league will provide regulation approved baseballs.

8. Interleague Play

- a. The Baseball Commissioner can schedule home and away series for teams in the Colt division against teams from any other leagues.
- b. Teams will be allowed to use farm players or to borrow players from any other team in their division only, upon approval of the League Director or Baseball Commissioner.
- c. When playing at home, home rules apply. When playing away, their league rules apply.
- d. *No one on a CIF roster can play in our league. The age limit is 15 to 19 years old, but they need to be currently in high school.*
- e. *The mercy rule is 10 runs after 5 innings and 8 runs after 6 innings.*
- f. *The home team determines the time limit or drop-dead rules. Please be sure to discuss this at the plate meeting with the visiting manager and umpire crew.*
- g. *Pitch count rules are in play. See rules on the Hart website for exact details, but these are Pitch Smart USA rules, however, we record the first pitch to the last batter (not total pitches).*
- h. *Catchers can only pitch up to 39 batters in a game. So, if someone appears as a catcher, they have a hard stop of 39 pitches if they also pitch at some point in that game.*
- i. *Send scores and pitch counts to the league director within 24 hours of game completion.*
- j. *Games played against East Valley teams count in the standings.*
- k. *There will be a double elimination playoff that will start on the second Saturday in May and conclude on the first Saturday in June.*

APPENDIX A7

FALL/SPRING CLUB/ABL (ADVANCED BASEBALL LEAGUE) BASEBALL LEAGUE

- 1. Schedule** - The Fall Baseball Club(/ABL) will primarily play on Sundays.
- 2. Governing Rules – We are now governed by USSSA Rules.**
 - a. Rules shall be governed by Wm. S. Hart League Rules, the Rules of PONY Baseball, USSSA Baseball, and the Official Rules of Baseball. Supplemental rules will be posted governing this league prior to the first game.
 - b. The Fall Club Baseball League is open to club teams on a first-come first-served basis. The divisions shall be classified as 8 and under (8u), 9 and under (9u), 10 and under (10u), 11 and under (11u), 12 and under (12u), 13 and under (13u), 14 and under (14u), and 18 and under (18u). The number of teams and/or divisions is subject to interest and field availability as determined by the Commissioner(s).
 - c. At the discretion of the Commissioner(s), standings may be maintained by the league and awards may be given to the first-place team in each division.

- d. Age determination shall be April 30th cutoff date. Players may play up but not down and may only participate in one team per division.
- e. Insurance will be required by all teams participating and Wm. S. Hart shall be listed as an additional insured on the insurance form.
- f. Games will be played on Sundays only concurrent with the fall program and consist of an eight (8) to ten (10) game schedule. Rainouts may be rescheduled at the discretion of the Commissioner(s).
- g. Practices will not be allowed at the Wm. S. Hart complex, unless the team is eligible as per Hart's director in good standing.
- h. Rosters will be submitted at the time of registration. Substitute players must meet the age requirements of the league.
- i. When possible two (2) umpires per game will be provided by the league and will be paid by the teams prior to each game. The home team will pay for the plate umpire and the visiting team will pay the base umpire. (The 8u division will use one umpire paid equally by both teams). Umpires will be paid directly by USSSA.
- j. No new inning will be started two hours after the scheduled starting time and the game will be called after 2 hours and 15 minutes of play.
- k. There is no 10-run mercy rule for Sunday Fall Club Ball/ABL.
- l. Field care and maintenance is the responsibility of the respective teams per Section V of the Wm. S. Hart League rules.
- m. All teams will be required to supply their own uniforms. The league will provide one (1) dozen regulation baseballs.

3. Baserunners

- a. The runner is out when the runner does not slide or attempt to get around a fielder (to include the catcher) who has the ball and is waiting to make the tag.

- 4. Courtesy Runner** - A courtesy runner (player making the last out) for the pitcher or catcher of record the previous inning, if on base with two outs, may be used to help speed up the game without a substitution being recorded.

2024 USSSA/ABL League Rules Divisions are based upon player's ages as of the year 2024 league age.

Each team needs to check in before the first league game and bring the following items:

- • Proof of Team Insurance
- • Copies of birth certificates for each player
- • Roster/ Medical Waiver form
- • League fee if not already paid.

League rules are as follows: Local Rules, National USSSA Rules then MLB Rules. So, if the rule is not found in the Local rules, then we go to National USSSA rules then we go to MLB rules.

Every effort will be made to complete the league. In the event of rain or darkness, the league director reserves the right to shorten games or modify schedules in order to finish the league.

8/10 regular season games plus 2 additional playoff games. **LENGTH OF GAMES:**

- • 7u through 8u will play 6 innings or 1:30 no new inning. Must complete the inning.
- • 9u through 10u will play 6 innings or 1:35 no new inning. Must complete the inning.
- • 11u through 12u will play 6 innings or 1:40 no new inning. Must complete the inning.
- • 13u through 14u will play 7 innings or 1:45 no new inning. Must complete the inning.

IF THE HOME TEAM IS HITTING AND WINNING WHEN TIME EXPIRES, THE GAME IS OVER AND THE SCORE IS REPORTED AS WHAT IT IS AT THAT POINT

A new inning begins when the 3rd out is made in the previous inning. The new inning does not begin when the Defensive team takes the field.

If a game is called due to darkness, regardless of which team is winning or at bat (UMPIRES JUDGEMENT) score will revert back to the last completed inning unless home team is hitting with the game tied or ahead.

Coin flips will be used to determine Home team for all games. Ties count on records.

PITCHING RULES:

- 7u through 12u= 6 innings maximum per day.

- 13u thru 14u= 7 innings maximum per day.

A pitcher who pitches in more than one game on the same calendar day may pitch any combination of innings as long as they do not exceed the division max.

Violation of the above pitching rules will result in the ejection of both the manager and the player from the game. If this violation occurs both manager and player must sit out their next scheduled game also.

Once a pitcher pitches one pitch, it's considered an inning pitched.

No pitches need to be thrown to intentionally walk a batter. Tell umpire you are walking batter and put batter on base.

Upon a second trip to the mound in the same inning, the pitcher must be removed for ALL divisions. Once a pitcher is removed, they may not return to the mound.

A maximum of 9 defensive players on the field and a minimum of 8 required to play. If a team can only field 8 players, every time the 9th spot come up in the batting order it is an OUT. This will continue throughout the game.

Manager may use the following line up options:

- 1) A nine (9) player line-up, or a nine (9) player line-up with a Designated Hitter (DH), or 2) A ten (10) player line-up with an Extra Hitter (EH), or a 10-player line-up with a DH and EH, or
- 3) A continuous line-up of all present, eligible, uniformed players. (No DH allowed)

Such line-up must be declared before the start of the game and used the entire game.

Only the batter who is assigned as the DH may re-enter as the DH under the re-entry rule. (Note: The DH can be used for any position player.)

Teams may run for the pitcher/catcher of record at ANY time with a player on the bench. If a team is batting 9 players, it must be the sub if batting entire lineup it's the last out. Once the lineup is submitted, the number of batters may not change. Players not in the original lineup may only enter once and once removed can no longer re-enter the batting order. Offensive players that were in the original lineup and removed for substitution must re- enter lineup in the original spot they were removed from and may not be removed again. All substitutions must be made through the umpire, including pitching changes. Later arriving players may be added to the bottom of lineup upon arrival if batting entire lineup.

If a player is injured or sick and no substitution is available, the player will not be called out but may not return to tournament play for the remainder of day. All players should wear a uniform. Uniforms need to have numbers on the back (if a player does not have a number on their uniform, please inform the director prior to your first game). If a number is not present, it will be handled at the tournament director's discretion.

Must slide rule is in effect for all ages. Safety of the players is a priority. A runner must slide or attempt to avoid contact with another player. Any player that attempts to hurt or injure another player will be called out. If the umpire feels the contact was malicious the offending player will be ejected from the game.

FORFEITS: In the case a team forfeits the score will be as follows: 6u-10u (10-0) / 11u- 14u (12-0).

MERCY RULE: 20 run mercy rule after 2 complete innings, 15 run mercy rule after 3 complete innings, 8 run mercy rule after 4 complete innings.

Protest Rule: If a protest is filed a \$100 protest fee must be paid at the time of the protest, this is to eliminate false protest to stall game. If protest is granted in your favor the fee will be returned. The game will be stopped at that point and ruled upon by the TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR.

All managers are responsible for their fans, coaches and players. It will be their responsibility to keep the fans in line. If a parent or spectator is causing a distraction to the game or umpire the manager will be warned and if repeated the manager will be ejected from the game. In the event the manager, coach, player, or spectator is thrown out of the game they will be asked to leave the

baseball compound. If he/she does not leave the field within 5 minutes his or her team will forfeit the game at that time. This includes helping us enforce mask rules and social distancing guidelines.

If a player is ejected from the game and no substitute is available an out will be recorded every time, he/she comes up in the batting order. If a manager is ejected, they must also sit out the next scheduled game. If a player/fan is ejected, it is at the State Director's discretion if they sit out the next scheduled game.

Metal cleats not allowed in 13U and below.

Bat Rules: All bats must have the USSSA 1.15 stamp on them or the bat will not be allowed to be used. 14U is BBCOR or Wood only. 13U is -8 and lower only. 2 3/4" bats will be allowed. Bats with USA Baseball Stamp are also ok to use. Violation of rule will be an out the first time and ejection of player and coach on the second violation. (CHECK USSSA BAT LIST FOR SPECIFIC BANNED BATS)

****7u/8u****

Teams may only field 9 players on defense. In the case where a team has only 8 players the team will receive an OUT every time the 9th spot comes up in the batting order. If a team only has 8 players, one must play the catcher position.

NO INFIELD FLY RULE

Only the manager of record is permitted to call "TIME". There will be only 1 offensive time out per inning.

Stealing is permitted. The runner must remain on the base until the pitch *leaves the pitcher's hand*. If the runner leaves early and is thrown out, the out remains. If a runner leaves early and makes it safely to the next base, the runner will still be called out.

Home plate is open. It is *NOT FROZEN*.

Bunting is allowed.

Only uniformed players and 3 coaches will be allowed on the field or the dugout.

The distance from the pitcher's mound to home plate may be 38/40 feet.

5 run rule will be in until current state guidelines change.

There is a NO Balk rule.

A player may not return to the pitcher's mound after once having been removed as a pitcher.

APPENDIX A8

Tournament Eligibility

1. To be eligible to play on a tournament team, a player must play at least 50% of the regular season games.
2. Tournament player eligibility shall be determined by PONY Baseball rules for all sanctioned tournaments. (Reference PONY Baseball rulebooks for eligibility requirements.)

APPENDIX A9

SELECT TEAMS

Wm. S. Hart Baseball program is conducted under the sanction of PONY Baseball. One of the sanctioned events that William S. Hart PONY Baseball offers is Select Team participation in the Shetland, Pinto, Mustang, Bronce, Pony, Colt age divisions. Players must be registered in Wm. S. Hart recreation program and play on a drafted team. The Select Teams may only play games with other PONY Baseball Select Rec Teams. The Select program was established to provide additional opportunity for players who wish to improve their baseball skills beyond the regular league season but who have not yet reached the “A” classification level (travel ball).

1. Players may elect to play on a Select Team in conjunction with their league team per the Wm S. Hart Baseball rules.
2. There can be more than one Select team in each age group.
3. Select teams are available in the Shetland, Pinto, Mustang, Bronce, Pony, Colt age divisions.
4. All expenses associated with the Select Team are to be covered by the families of the select players (uniforms, equipment, tournament fees).
5. Players are not required to have a minimum amount of play time like we have in league play but follow tournament play rules during Select Tournaments.
6. The Baseball Commissioners, League Director and Chief Umpire select Coaches for the Select Teams.
7. Player selection for the teams will be at the discretion of the Select Coaches. If there are more players interested in participating on a Select Team than there are teams, a try-out may be

scheduled. The selection process will be reviewed each year. There will not be Red or White teams for the select team rule. The commissioner and the league director will decide teams.

SOFTBALL RULES OF PLAY

In the event of a conflict between the following rules and USA softball rules, these league rules will take precedence. Any situations not covered by these rules shall defer to the rules of USA SOFBALL. Any situation not covered by any of these rules will be handled by the League Rules Committee and or the Board of Directors.

The following shall apply to all softball divisions:

1. **Softball Divisions** – Girl's softball shall be organized into five (5) divisions as follows: Senior Division 18u (League ages 13 through 17), Junior Division 12u (League ages 11 through 12), Minor Division 10u (League ages 9 through 10), Mini-Minor Division 8u (League ages 7 through 8), and Filly Division 6u (League ages 5 through 6). The fall season will use the upcoming USA Softball spring season to determine league age. The spring season will use the current USA Softball guidelines.
 - a. There will be no players assigned to a lower league.
 - b. Players may play in a higher division. The following conditions must be met for a girl to play up a division:
 - i. Players can only move up one year. (As an example: If the player is league age 9 minor, the player cannot play in the Junior Division. If they are in league age 10, they are eligible to play in the Junior Division.)
 - ii. Players must try out in each division and declare their eligibility to play in the higher division.
 - iii. If the player is not drafted by the 4th round in the higher division, they will automatically be moved to their league age division.
 - iv. Players that play in a higher division than their league age are eligible league All-Stars in the higher division but not in their league age division.
 - v. Players who play in a higher division are eligible for the USA Tournament to play for either their league age division or the higher division into which they were drafted. The Tournament Team the player plays on will be determined by the Tournament Team Selection. A player in a lower division may only play on a Tournament team in a higher division if the lower division does not have a Tournament Team. *A player* who is chosen for an USA Tournament team is not eligible for league All-Stars.
 - vi. Players who want to play up to a division with American and National Leagues must be drafted in the National League by the 4th round and will not be eligible to be drafted into the American League.
 - vii. A manager shall not manage in a league that their daughter does not qualify for age wise; a manager in an upper league shall not bring up his

or her own daughter unless approved by the Softball Commissioner and League Director

- c. American/National League Split Divisions - When there is sufficient enrollment, divisions may be organized into two leagues.
 - i. Spring season only at the discretion of the Softball Commissioner and League Directors
 - ii. One will be called the National League and the other will be called the American League.
 - iii. Per USA Softball rules, there must be at least 6 teams in the advance division.
 - iv. Split divisions can only occur in 10U and above.
 - d. If a division is not split American/National during the spring season teams will be considered as National.
- 2. Season Definition** - The first Monday of the 3rd week of March will mark the start of the “second half” of the season.
- 3. Recruitment** - There shall be no recruitment for individual teams.
- a. Once the draft has been completed, any new player added to the league will be put into a hat and drawn at random between all teams short of players, regardless of which team is next in the serpentine order established for the draft. Exception: A designated pitcher or traveling team player may be assigned to a team by the League Rules Committee in order to keep all teams competitive.
 - b. Pitchers or those wishing to pitch, or those players taking pitching lessons must identify themselves as a potential pitcher prior to the draft, or they may be ineligible to pitch during the season. The Softball Commissioner will make final decisions together with the Division Director.
 - c. Travel teams and eligible high school players are requested to identify themselves prior to draft. This is an effort to keep all teams in the league competitive.

SECTION I

PREGAME Game Supervision (All Divisions except Filly) – Once the Umpire in Charge (the plate umpire) calls the managers to the plate for the pre-game meeting, only three adults (team manager and two coaches) will be allowed in the dugout or on the field of play. Two adults at a time will be allowed on the field of play (as base coaches) during the course of a game, except during pre-game warm-up and between innings when all three may be present on the field of play. Team managers are responsible for all adults preparing the field prior to each game and after. Exception: For mini-minor during coach pitch, an additional coach may be on the field as a “pitcher.”

- 1. **Lineup Sheet** – All rostered players must appear on the game lineup sheet even if they are not present for the game. Any absent player must be reported by his manager to the official scorekeeper, the Umpire in Charge, and the opposing manager prior to the start of the game. A manager who fails to report an absent player to the official scorekeeper will be subject to a one game suspension. Any subsequent infraction of this rule will result in the manager

being removed from the team for the remainder of the season. A copy of the lineup sheet should be given to the opposing team, the official scorekeeper and the plate umpire.

SECTION II

EQUIPMENT

1. **Uniforms** – League assigned uniforms must be worn on the playing field. Color coordinated softball pants or color coordinated shorts with mandatory sliding pants are required on a per team basis. For all leagues, jerseys will be completely and tightly tucked in so that the belt or waistband is visible.
2. **Cold Weather** – Sports type jackets and sweatshirts will be permitted on the field or while on base during cold weather upon approval of the umpire. Players may not wear anything covering their uniform number while at bat. Team color coordination is recommended.
3. **Cleats** – Rubber/plastic cleats are required in Filly, Mini-Minor, Minor, and Junior. Metal cleats ARE permitted in Senior.
4. **Managers/Coaches Attire** – During regular league games and playoffs, all managers and coaches should be attired in clothing appropriate to baseball or softball. The league recommends that managers wear team colors.
5. **Bats** – Safety rules concerning bats are continually changing. All USA Softball rules addressing bats are to be followed to the letter.
6. **Injured Players** – Any player with a cast or boot will not be able to play until they are able to participate without the temporary medical apparatus. This will allow the player ample time to completely heal before returning to the field of play.
7. **Batting Helmets** – helmets face mask and with the NOCSAE seal for tournament play are mandatory and must be worn by any offensive player while in the field of play, including during practice or tournament play. This rule does not supersede USA Softball rules regarding helmets but it is in addition to that. Any player under the age of 18 who enters the field for any reason must also wear an approved batting helmet. It is strongly recommended that adults, when positioned in the coach's box, wear protective headgear.
8. **Catchers Equipment** – Every player, while playing the position of catcher (during games and practices) must wear the catcher's protective gear provided by the league or personal equipment bearing the NOCSAE approval label at all times. When warming up the pitcher, the player catching must wear an approved catcher's mask.

9. **Coaching staff** (except for Filly) – on the field of play must be in the 1st or 3rd base coach's box. In Mini-Minor during coach pitch a coach may enter the field as a pitcher only and will not coach while acting as a pitcher.
10. **Softballs** – For each game, the home team will provide a new, division appropriate softball, and the visiting team will provide a lightly used division appropriate softball.
 - a. Senior and Junior Leagues will use 12" softballs.
 - b. Filly and Mini-Minor Leagues will use 10" RIF softballs.
 - c. Minor League will use 11" safety softballs.

SECTION III

THE GAME

1. No new inning shall begin 90 minutes after the official start of the game. A new inning shall begin when the last out of the previous inning is recorded.
2. Regular season games **MAY** end in a tie.
3. If a game is suspended for any reason (i.e., weather) and the game has been played for at least 1 hour *or* a regulation length game, it will be considered a complete game. If at the time that the game was suspended it was an incomplete inning, the reported score will be the score at the last complete inning (revert back) unless it is the bottom of the inning, and the home team is ahead. If the game is halted and it is incomplete, it will be completed, if necessary, at a later date.
4. International Tie Breaker (ITB)- If the regulation innings are completed prior to 1:30 and the game is tied, an International Tiebreaker will be used to declare a winner. Any inning that has started will be completed except if the home team is ahead when 90 minutes has been reached in which case the game is over and the home team wins. A new inning begins when the 3rd out of the prior inning is recorded. During ITB there is free pitching (anyone may return to pitch)
5. Minimum Play - Each player must play a minimum of two innings at any infield position.
 - a. Exceptions to this rule may be made by parental request only.
 - b. At least one of the innings must be completed prior to the end of the third inning.
 - c. No player may sit out more than 2 innings during the same game ***and these innings cannot be consecutive innings***. A player that has been designated to "sit out," must sit out the ENTIRE inning (3 outs). Exception: During ITB a player can sit out a 3rd inning.
 - d. Exception to this rule is if any injury occurs on the field and the player is removed from play, and there is no other player that can be entered into the game, the player sitting out may be reentered into the game.
 - e. The team manager shall report all player defensive positions and any player(s) sitting out to the Official Scorekeeper.

6. Run Go Ahead Rule - An inning will be completed when, a) three outs have been made, or when the offensive team in their ½ of an inning has scored four (4) more runs than what the other team currently has, or if the offensive team is ahead in score, then they may only score four (4) more runs than what they started with.
7. There shall be a 10 Run mercy rule effective at the end of a regulation game, including playoffs and championship game.
8. Regulation Game

	Complete Game	Regulation Game Mercy Rule Applies	Time Limit
Filly	5 Innings	n/a	75 min Drop Dead
Mini-Minor	5 Innings	After 3rd	90 min No New Inning
Minor	6 Innings	After 4th	90 min No New Inning
Junior	7 Innings	After 5th	90 min No New Inning
Senior	7 Innings	After 5 th	90 min No New Inning

9. Batting Order - It is mandatory in all divisions that all players are in the batting lineup and that free substitution is utilized in the field. In the case where an offensive player bats and the player is not listed on the lineup or bats out of order, the USA Softball batting out of order rule shall apply.
10. Courtesy Runner – A Courtesy Runner may be used for the catcher or pitcher on record, if on base, no matter how many outs have been recorded. The Courtesy Runner will be the last recorded out. If no outs have yet been made in an inning the player making the last out in the previous inning can be used as the Courtesy Runner. This is to help speed up the game without a substitution being recorded. This will be in effect for Minor, Junior and Senior divisions only.
11. Substitutions and Injuries - Substitutions are to be made at the start of the 1/2 inning except in the case of an injured player, in which instance the substitution can be made immediately for the injured player. In the case of an injured offensive player, the substitute player shall be the player who made the last out either in the inning of play or the previous inning if no outs have been recorded. The injured player must sit out at least one inning (the remainder of the 1/2 inning which the player is injured, plus the next 1/2 inning). If the player returns to the game, he/she must return to his/her original position in the batting order. If a player is removed from the game for disciplinary action or must leave early, the player's batting lineup position is skipped (an out shall not be recorded) and the player must remain out for the remainder of the game. If a player is injured in the first inning and no outs have yet been made, the last batter scheduled to bat in the inning will run for the injured player.

12. Pitching Changes – A manager may change pitchers at any point in the game that he/she wishes. The manager may bring a player off the bench to pitch so long as the minimum play rules are not violated.
13. One pitch in an inning is considered an inning pitched.
14. *A runner must attempt to avoid a collision per 2024 USA Rule Supplement 13. A runner may be called out for not attempting to slide.*

SECTION IV

FARM TEAMS

1. The lower division will serve as the farm division for the next division (i.e., Filly will be the farm system for Mini-Minor, Mini-Minor for Minor, Minor for Junior, and Junior for Senior). The Softball Commissioner will assign farm teams to all leagues.
2. When a division is split, the American League will farm to the same league age National League and the National League will farm to the next level age division.
3. Filly League – Only 6-year-old players are eligible to farm to Mini-Minor.
4. Any farm player must be confirmed ahead of the game time by both division directors (division from and division to).
5. Any farmed player must not be from a “like” team (i.e., a Bruin player cannot play for the Bruin team).
6. **Substitute Player Requests** - A manager who needs a player from his/her farm team will request a list of three players names from the farm team manager that are available for loan if the manager needs one player and a list of four names if the manager needs two players. Farm team players must wear the uniform of the team by which she was drafted. Farm players need to go through both league directors.
7. **Players Lost for the Season** - If a player is lost for the entire season on any team, the manager must notify the league director within 24 hours and a player will be placed on the team from the waiting list. Players added from the waiting list after the midpoint of the season are not eligible to play in League playoffs or USA Softball sanctioned tournaments. Players lost on national league teams are not replaced with players from the waiting list unless approved by the Rules Committee.
8. **Maximum Games** – The same farm team player may not be utilized by the same team for more than two games during the season.
9. **Last Minute Shortages** - When a team is unable to find last minute players, or for minors it is a weekday, 7:00 PM game, and farm players are not available, players from the opposing team may be used. The team must have a minimum of 6 players. Up to 3 players that were the last out (or bottom of the line up, if it is the first inning) from the opposing team can be utilized. These players will only play defense and must play in the outfield. This avoids a forfeit and allows the game to be played.

- 10. Farm Player Usage** - Farm players must bat at the end of the batting order and may only play the outfield positions. Rostered players arriving after the start of the game are inserted in the batting order following the farm players.
- 11. Penalties** - Failure to follow these farm team substitution rules will result in a one game suspension of the manager and/or forfeit of the game.
- 12. Playoff Usage** - The above rules apply for playoffs.

DELETE THIS SECTION

~~Recruitment – There shall be no recruiting for individual teams.–~~

~~Once the draft has been completed, any new player added to the league will be put into a hat and drawn at random between all teams short of players, regardless of which team is next in the serpentine order established for the draft. Exception: A designated pitcher or traveling team player may be assigned to a team by the League Rules Committee in order to keep all teams competitive.~~

~~Pitchers or those wishing to pitch, or those players taking pitching lessons must identify themselves as a potential pitcher prior to the draft, or they may be ineligible to pitch during the season. The Softball Commissioner will make final decisions together with the Division Director.~~

~~Travel teams and eligible high school players are requested to identify themselves prior to draft. This is an effort to keep all teams in the league competitive.~~

SECTION V

LEAGUE CHAMPION / PLAYOFFS

In all divisions except Filly, there will be playoffs at the end of the season. All teams will qualify for the playoffs in divisions that have playoffs.

1. The season shall consist of a minimum of 16 games including playoffs.
2. There shall be no co-champions of the league.
3. Unless modified by the Commissioner and League Director, the format will be double elimination.
4. Seeding for the playoffs will be based on overall regular season record as shown on the Hart website. Ties in the standing will be broken on the basis of head-to-head record, and then, if necessary, by coin flip.
5. If there are any regular season tie games which have a bearing on the playoff seeding and there are no more meetings between the two teams giving them the opportunity to

determine a winner, a tie will be recorded, and seeding will be determined by head-to-head record (vs. each other in other games played) , ***least runs allowed*** and then by a coin toss.

6. Home Team Definition:

- a. For all teams playing and remaining in the Winner's Bracket, the home team for each playoff game will be determined by the original playoff seeding of teams, based on final league standings from the season.
- b. For all teams dropping into the Loser's Bracket, the home team will be listed at the top half of the bracket.
- c. The Home Team will occupy the third base dugout and assume the regular season duties (lining the field, etc.).
- d. The Visiting Team will occupy the first base dugout and assume the duties of the visitor team (dragging the infield, etc.).

7. Playoff games will follow the same time and inning rules as the regular season. The Championship Game (both the first game and the if necessary game) will not have a time limit and must be played to complete game status as described in Section I – League General Rules, Specific General Rules #9. The Softball Commissioner will reschedule games suspended due to weather, curfew, or any other reason for completion at the earliest possible time.

8. The 10-run mercy rule applies in the playoffs.

9. There are no pitching limits during playoffs.

10. The Minimum Play Rule stating that a player must play in the infield will NOT BE IN EFFECT during the playoffs for the Minor, Junior and Senior Divisions.

11. FOR the *SEMI-FINAL*, CHAMPIONSHIP and “IF NECESSARY” GAMES ONLY – The run ahead rule will not be in effect for the Minor, Junior, and Senior Divisions.

12. Decisions Committee

- a. Three (3) rules committee members shall be present for all playoff games.
- b. In the absence of 3 rules committee members, any three-league officials (directors or adult umpires) that have no children in that division shall rule on the protest. They shall decide on protests. Protests during the playoffs will be decided immediately and cannot be appealed.

SECTION VI

TOURNAMENT PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. To be eligible to play on a tournament team, a player must play at least 75% of the regular season games.
2. Tournament players' eligibility shall be determined per USA Softball rules for all sanctioned tournaments. (Reference USA Softball rulebooks for eligibility requirements.)

SECTION VII

INTERLEAGUE PLAY

1. The softball commissioner can schedule home and away series for teams in any league consisting of less than six teams (other than Filly), against teams from any other league in the USA Softball of SoCal Western District.
2. Teams will be allowed to use farm players or to borrow players from any other team in their division only, upon approval of the League Director or Softball Commissioner.
3. When playing at home, home rules apply. When playing away, their league rules apply.

SECTION VIII

FALL LEAGUE RULES

The fall program will be instructional. League standings will not be maintained, and no trophies will be awarded. Generally, the Spring American league rules will be followed. However, to ensure the instructional purpose of the fall program, the following exceptions and changes will be in effect:

1. **Age Divisions**
 - a. Players typically try out and play in the Age Division for which they will be league-age during the following Spring Season.
 - b. The Senior Division ages will be ages 13 through 17.
 - c. If there are enough players to field 4 teams, there will be a Filly division in the Fall Program. If there are fewer than 4 teams, the players will be registered in the Shetland division.
2. **Uniforms** - The league will provide uniform shirts, hats/visors, and catcher's gear. Players will provide their own pants, socks, helmets, belts, bats, or any other equipment required.

3. **Drafting** – In each league, if a majority of the managers agree, each team can select one coach per team.
 - a. The coach's child shall be drafted in the round agreed upon by a majority of the managers.
 - b. In the event of a tie the league director shall place the child in the appropriate round.
4. **Hat Picks** - Hat picks that have scheduling conflicts with a team's designated practice time (fall league only) will be put back in the hat and another player will be drawn.
5. **Pitching Limits** - The pitchers may pitch a maximum of two innings in the Mini-Minor, three innings in the Minor Division, and four innings in the Junior, and Senior Divisions. **Exception** for MM: If a game goes beyond 4 innings, then the manager has the option of using any player as pitcher regardless of the innings pitched in the game. **Exception: in Junior and Senior if the Softball Commissioner and League Director feel that there is not enough pitching, a player may pitch the entire game.**
6. **Minimum Play** – The same Minimum Play rules apply in all divisions as during the Spring Season
7. **Scorebooks** - There will be no "official" scorebooks.
8. **Protests** - There will be no protests.
9. **Player Shortage** - There will be no "farm teams". Teams with less than nine players will borrow a player (or players) from the opposing team (if available) for the game. The last batter due up will play defense for the opposing team in the forthcoming inning and must play an outfield position.
10. **Incomplete/Cancelled Games** - Incomplete games will not be made up at a later date. Games canceled due to rain or other reasons will be rescheduled if possible.
11. **Umpires** - The league will arrange for the home-plate umpire, who will be paid by each team by splitting the game fees in half.
12. **Practices** - One practice slot per team per week will be allotted on the league playing fields. The League Director(s) will post a practice schedule for their division with approval of the Commissioner(s). Gates to the complex will be opened at 4:00 PM. No practice should begin prior to this time. Practices shall conclude no later than 9:15 PM. All field lights will be shut off promptly at 9:30 PM and the complex will be locked up. The team manager is responsible for seeing that the field is left in proper condition after practices (including dragging and raking of field, ***pulling the bases***, cleaning up trash, etc.), in accordance with the League Rules. A minimum of one team practice per week, held by the manager, is mandatory. This does not include practice games. ***While practicing, teams who have been assigned a time slot on the fields also have the priority for their associated batting cage.***

13. Beginning in Fall 2025, Hart will offer a Select Program in conjunction with SoCal USA Softball. Players do not need to play on a drafted team to participate in the Fall Select Program.

- a. *All players will register through Hart*
- b. *Managers will notify the league director of their interest in managing a Fall Select Team. All Managers must be approved by the league director and the Softball Commissioner*
- c. *Managers will supply the League Registrar with the select team roster. They will be removed from the player evaluation list and placed on their team roster.*
- d. *The league will provide uniforms and a weekly practice spot which may be on the weekend. Teams will practice, play friendlies with other league select teams or participate in SoCal USA Sanctioned Select Tournaments.*
- e. *No player may also be playing on a Travel team and no Select team may practice/scrimmage/play in a tournament with travel teams.*
- f. *Teams will be formed at the conclusion of fall registration.*

14. Minor Division - If in the opinion of the Softball Commissioner and the League Directors and if the Minor managers agree, if the pitching is not up to the level that would allow the game to move along in a timely manner, then the Mini Minor pitching rules will be put into effect for **THE FIRST HALF OF PLAY ONLY** to include coach pitch on ball 4, one base allowed for any ball hit off coach, etc. Also, in effect for the first half only – ~~no-dropped third strike rule and~~ no stealing of home will be allowed. Players will be allowed to steal (during player pitch only) one base per pitch. All regular Minor rules will be in effect in the second half of play.

15. Defensive Players – Mini-Minor teams may play up to 10 defensive players (6 infielders and 4 outfielders). The *Minor*, Junior and Senior Leagues will play only 9 defensive players.

16. Number of Games - The Fall season will usually consist of **at least** eight (8) games.

17. Game Times – For all games, no new inning will begin after 1 hour and 30 minutes with a drop-dead time limit of 1:45.

18. There shall be a maximum of 4 runs per half inning allowed **or 3 outs**. The Official umpire is responsible for tracking the runs in each half inning.

19. Filly Division

- a. The first 2 games will have the ball hit only off the tee and runners will run base to base and no players will be removed from the base if they are out.
- b. For the next 3 games there will be coach pitch before hitting off the tee. Runners will run base to base and a player will be removed from the base if they are out.

- c. For the remainder of the season, if a player hits off a coach pitch, they can run until they are put out or the pitcher has “control” of the ball. A player will be removed from the base if they are out.
- d. Everyone hits once through the lineup in each half inning.

APPENDIX B1

Filly Division

1. The Season

- a. The Fillies shall play a limited season of ten (10) to fourteen (14) games, depending on the number of teams in the league.
- b. During the first two games of the season The Filly Division shall be an instructional league, which will be limited to a batting tee (no live pitching) as an introduction to girls' softball.
- c. There shall be no division standings maintained for the Filly.

2. The Game

- a. A regulation game shall consist of 5 innings.
- b. There will be a time limit of no new inning after one hour. Everyone hits through the lineup in each half inning.
- c. Scorebooks will not be kept.
- d. Batting lineups will be used.
- e. An inning will be completed after the offensive team has batted completely through their lineup. With the last batter up, the inning will end when the ball reaches any defensive player while touching home plate or an out is obtained in any normal manner.
- f. There will not be any umpires in this league.
- g. Two (2) Defensive coaches and one (1) Offensive coach are allowed on the field of play for instructional purposes.
- h. The home team is responsible for obtaining a league provided batting tee and game ball for the game.

3. Batter

- a. Rules for hitting off the tee:
 - i. **NO BUNTING.** The batter must take a full swing.
 - ii. The ball must go beyond a 10' arc between the first and third baselines, from home plate, or it will be considered a foul ball.
- b. The batter must hit the ball and not the tee. If the batter hits the tee and not the ball, it will be considered a foul ball. If the bat hits both the tee and the ball, it is a legal hit.
- c. Any hit ball, whether intentional or not, is in play.
- d. Up to two (2) practice swings will be permitted, after which it will be considered a swing and a miss and called a strike. Up to four (4) swings can be taken off of the tee. If the fourth swing is a foul, then a fifth swing will be allowed. If a player has not hit the ball after these swings, the player is out.

- e. Rules for coach pitching:
 - i. There will be no bunting in the Filly Division. Batters must take full swings.
 - ii. If the batter has not put the ball in play after three pitches, the batting tee will be brought out. The batter shall be allowed a maximum of two (2) swings to put the ball into play.
 - iii. If the last coach pitch is a foul ball, the batter gets another pitch.
 - iv. Rules for hitting off the tee per 3a above will be in effect (except for swing counts).

4. Base Running

- a. Stealing is **NOT** permitted in this division.
- b. There will be **NO** "infield fly" rule in this division.
- c. Base runners who are out will be removed from the bases.
- d. During the first half of the season, baserunners will be allowed to run only to the next available base. During the second half of the season a base runner can only run one base on a hit off the tee but can run all bases if hit off of coach pitch. To stop the base runner, the defense must return the ball to the pitcher or stop the baserunners in a traditional manner. Any ball that crosses the pitching circle will be considered to be "in control" by the pitcher. Once the pitcher is "in control" of the ball, a base runner will be allowed to continue to the next base if they are past the half way mark or return to the base if they are less than half way. It is up to the Softball Commissioner and Filly League Director to adjust the start of the "half-way mark" in the season if needed.
- e.

5. In the Field

- a. All players on the team will play in the field every inning.
- b. There shall be seven (7) players positioned on the infield (within the baselines) and the remaining players shall play in the outfield. Outfielders must play at least three (3) feet beyond the baseline.
- c. All players must play in an infield position at least one complete inning by the end of the second inning.

6. The Pitcher

- a. No player may pitch in the Filly Division.
- b. The player assigned to the position of 'pitcher' shall stand even or behind the pitching plate with both feet in the circle.
- c. The coach who is pitching must have both feet within the pitcher's circle.

7. The Catcher - Catcher's equipment must be worn whenever a batter is up to bat.

8. Batting Helmets - Batting helmets with facemasks must be worn at all times by offensive players when on the field of play (i.e., on deck, at bat, or running bases).

9. Game Pace - It is expected that the managers should move the game along at a pace to complete at least two (2) innings per game.

10. Field Setup

- a. An arc reaching ten (10) feet from the back point of home plate should be chalked from foul line to foul line.
- b. During the last half of the season, a three (3) foot chalk line should be placed halfway between 1st and 2nd base, 2nd and 3rd base, and between 3rd base and home plate.
- c. An 8-foot pitching circle should be marked throughout the season.

APPENDIX B2

MINI-MINOR DIVISION

1. The Game

- a. A regulation game shall consist of five (5) innings.
- b. The run ahead rule shall apply to only the first four (4) innings. After four (4) innings have been completed, a team may continue to score until three outs have been recorded.
- c. If a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more after the 3rd inning, the game will be stopped, and the leading team will be declared the winner.
- d. The USA Softball circle rule is in effect for the Mini-Minor division.
- e. The Mini-Minor division shall be an instructional division, which will include player pitching.

2. Batter

- a. There will be no walks in this division.
 - i. After four (4) balls have been called by the umpire, rather than taking first base, the offensive team will provide a coach or parent to pitch to the batter (a strike can be called on the batter during coach pitch).
 - ii. Batter will resume the strike count when the coach/parent comes on the field.
 - iii. If the batter does not hit the ball fair or strike out after the fourth pitch, the batter shall be declared out.
 - iv. The coach-pitcher must be in contact with the pitching plate.
 - v. The pitcher for the defensive team must position BOTH feet within the eight (8) foot circle.
 - vi. There will be no bunting allowed off of a coach-pitch. A strike will be called on the batter whether the ball is hit or not.
 - vii. When the ball is put into play
 1. The coach must make a reasonable attempt to get out of the way. It will be the umpire's judgment whether interference occurs.
 2. The batter and any base runners shall advance only one base. There are no exceptions.
 3. The Coach-pitcher is not allowed to coach from live ball territory after the ball is pitched. This will be deemed

interference, and it will be declared a dead ball, and the runner will be **out**.

- b. There shall be no "Dropped third strike" rule in this division.
- c. There shall be no "Infield Fly" rule in this division.
- d. The USA Softball rule requiring batters to keep one foot in the batter's box between pitches is waived for this division.
- e. A player hit by a pitch by a player pitcher shall be awarded first base.

3. Base Running

- a. Stealing and catcher "pick-off" plays are not permitted in the first half of the season. If a runner attempts to gain an advantage-**by** advancing to the next base on the pitch, the umpire will issue a warning. A secondary or subsequent violation may result in the runner being called out. In the second half of the season, stealing and catcher "pick-off" plays will be allowed.
- b. Stealing during Coach Pitch is not permitted at any time.
- c. There is no stealing home ("cold home plate")
- d. Only one stolen base per pitch is allowed.
- e. If a runner leaves early during the first half of the season, she will be issued a warning. This will be a no-pitch on the pitcher. During the second half if a runner leaves early, they will be called out.

4. In the Field

- a. Ten (10) players will be on the field defensively.
- b. There shall be no more than seven (7) players playing on the infield (within the baselines) and the remaining players shall play in the outfield. Outfielders must play at least three (3) feet beyond the baseline. No player shall play closer to the batter than the pitcher.

5. The Pitcher

- a. The pitching distance shall be thirty (30) feet.
- b. No pitcher shall pitch more than two (2) innings per game. Exception: If a game goes beyond 4 innings, then the manager has the option of using any player as pitcher regardless of the innings pitched in the game.
- c. An illegal pitch shall be called a no-pitch ***during the first half of the season. During the second half of the season, it will be called an illegal pitch and will be recorded as a ball.***
- d. ***The pitcher of record will remain as pitcher during coach pitch.***

APPENDIX B3

MINOR DIVISION

1. The Game

- a. A complete game shall consist of six (6) innings.

- b. The run ahead rule shall apply to only the first five (5) innings. After five (5) innings have been completed, a team may continue to score until three outs have been recorded.
- c. If a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more after the 4th inning, the game will stop, and the leading team will be declared the winner.

2. The Pitcher

- a. The pitching distance shall be thirty-five (35) feet.
- b. No pitcher shall pitch more than four (4) innings per game. Exception: If a game goes beyond 6 innings (ITB) then the manager has the option of using any player as pitcher regardless of the innings pitched in the game.

3. The Batter

- a. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
- b. American League only
 - i. For the 1st half of a season, there will be no walks in this league.
 - ii. After four (4) balls have been called by the umpire, rather than taking first base, the offensive team will provide a coach or parent to pitch to the batter.
 - iii. If the batter does not hit the ball fair or strike out after the fourth pitch, the batter shall be declared out.
 - iv. Batter will resume the strike count when the coach/parent comes on the field.
 - v. The coach-pitcher must be in contact with the pitching plate.
 - vi. The pitcher for the defensive team must position herself within the eight (8) foot circle.
 - vii. There will be no bunting allowed off of a coach-pitch.
 - viii. When the ball is put into play, the coach must make a reasonable attempt to get out of the way. It will be the umpire's judgment whether interference occurs.
 - ix. For the 2nd half of the season, walks are permitted.
 - x. Only 1 run may score per inning, by virtue of a bases-loaded walk.
 - xi. All succeeding walks will be permitted only if a run is not scored. In this event, the batter will not walk, but instead, the offensive manager or coach will pitch to the batter who assumes the strike count (i.e., two runners cannot be scored via walks during the same inning.). The same coach-pitch rules will apply.
 - xii. There will be NO "Dropped third strike" rule in this division.

4. Base Running

- a. The infield fly rule is in effect for this division for the entire season.
- b. American League only: Stealing of home plate is NOT permitted in this league.

5. In the Field

- a. American League Only - 10 defensive players are allowed, 4 of which must be in the outfield.

APPENDIX B4

JUNIOR DIVISION

1. The Game

- a. A complete game shall consist of seven (7) innings.
- b. The run ahead rule shall apply to only the first six (6) innings. After six (6) innings have been completed, a team may continue to score until three outs have been recorded.
- c. If a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more after the 5th inning, the game will be stopped, and the leading team will be declared the winner.

2. The Pitcher

- a. The pitching distance shall be forty (40) feet.
- b. No pitcher shall pitch more than five (5) innings per game. Exception: If a game goes beyond 7 (ITB) innings then the manager has the option of using any player as pitcher regardless of the innings pitched in the game.
- c. If the Softball Commissioner and League Director feel there is not enough pitching in the league, then one pitcher can pitch the entire game. This will be reviewed each season.

3. Base Running

- a. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
- b. The Infield Fly rule is in effect.

APPENDIX B-5

SENIOR DIVISION

1. The Game

- a. A complete game shall consist of seven (7) innings.
- b. The run ahead rule shall apply to only the first six (6) innings. After six (6) innings have been completed, a team may continue to score until three outs have been recorded.
- c. If a team is ahead by ten (10) runs or more after the 5th inning, the game will be stopped, and the leading team will be declared the winner.

2. The Pitcher

- a. The pitching distance shall be forty-three (43) feet.
- b. No limits on innings pitched.

3. Base Running

- a. Dropped third strike rule is in effect.
- b. The Infield Fly rule is in effect.

APPENDIX B-6

SELECT TEAMS

Wm. S. Hart Softball program is conducted under the sanction of USA Softball. One of the sanctioned events that USA Softball of Southern California offers is Select Team participation in the *Mini*, Minor, Junior and Senior age divisions. Players must be registered in Wm. S. Hart recreation program *and during the Spring Season* must play on a drafted team. Select Teams may only play games with other USA Softball Select Rec Teams. The Select program was established to provide additional opportunity for players who wish to improve their softball skills beyond the regular league season but who have not yet reached the “A” classification level (travel ball). All current rules are available on the USA Softball of Southern California *website*.

1. Players may elect to play on a Select Team in conjunction with their league team per the USA Softball of SoCal rules.
2. There can be more than one Select team in each age group.
3. Select teams are available in the Mini-Minor, Minor, Junior and Senior Divisions.
4. All expenses associated with the Select Team are to be covered by the families of the select players (uniforms, equipment, tournament fees).
5. Players are not required to have a minimum amount of play time like we have in league play but follow tournament play rules during Select Tournaments.
6. The Softball Commissioner, League Director and Chief Umpire select Coaches for the Select Teams.
7. Player selection for the teams is at the discretion of the Select Coaches. If there are more players interested in participating on a Select Team than there are teams a try-out may be scheduled. The selection process will be reviewed each year. There will not be Gold or Silver teams for the select team rule. The commissioner and the league director will decide teams. *Player selection cannot occur prior to the end of spring registration.*