

Pinto Division Guidelines

The **Pinto Division** serves as a foundational player development program, designed to introduce young athletes to the game of baseball. All official league activities and games are held at **Mission Sports Park**. Our program is built on a seasonal progression: focusing on development in the Fall, transitioning to more structured competition in the Spring, and offering All-Star opportunities in the Summer.

Governing Rules & Authority

These guidelines apply to Pinto Division play and are supplemented by:

1. San Marcos Youth Baseball (SMYB) By-Laws
2. PONY Baseball Rules
3. Official Baseball Rules (OBR)

Any violation of the Division Guidelines, SMYB By-Laws, or PONY Rules may result in a game forfeit or the suspension of any player, manager, coach, umpire, or other person, for a period deemed appropriate by the SMYB Board.

Seasonal Structure

The Pinto Division follows a distinct structure for each season:

Fall Season

No official game scores or league standings will be maintained. The season is focused on instruction and player development, with no playoffs or postseason tournament.

Spring Season

Official game scores will be kept, and league standings will be maintained. If the schedule permits, all teams will participate in a postseason tournament.

Summer Season

Immediately following the Spring Season, the league **may** form a separate set of all-star teams composed of players from the Pinto division. Teams will participate in the PONY tournament and other local All-Star tournaments.

Managers & Assistant Coaches

Requirements

Only individuals who are OFFICIALLY APPROVED by the SMYB Board of Directors are permitted on the field during practices and games.

The team manager is solely responsible for ensuring that all assistant coaches:

1. Submit a Volunteer Application
2. Complete their SMYB Live Scan and J.D. Palatine (JDP) Background Check
3. Complete the appropriate trainings (i.e., Abuse Awareness, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, and Concussion in Sports)
4. And are officially approved by the SMYB Board of Directors

Code of Conduct

Managers and assistant coaches are expected to uphold the integrity of the game and the Pinto Division's mission of player development. This commitment requires them to:

1. Prioritize player development
2. Know and uphold all league rules
3. Lead by example through sportsmanship and positive role modeling
4. Respect players, umpires, officials, opponents, and parents
5. Ensure the safety and well-being of every athlete

By accepting a coaching role, all managers and assistant coaches agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

1. Umpires

Either adult or youth umpires will be used.

Managers and assistant coaches should be aware of the following:

- 1.1. Any umpire's decision that involves judgment, such as, but not limited to, whether a batted ball is fair or foul, whether a runner is safe or out, **is final**. No player, manager, coach, or substitute shall object to any such judgment decisions. (Official Baseball Rule 9.02(a))
- 1.2. Each umpire has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in the rules. (Official Baseball Rule 9.01(c))
- 1.3. Each umpire has the authority to disqualify any player, coach, manager, or substitute for objecting to a decision or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language, and to eject such disqualified person from the playing field. If an umpire disqualifies a player while a play is in progress, the disqualification shall not take effect until no further action is possible in that play. (Official Baseball Rule 9.01 (d))

2. Pitching

A pitching machine will be used from a distance of approximately **38 feet**.

- 2.1. The speed of the pitching machine will be set at **40 MPH**. The pitching machine should be set and tested before the game begins. Adjustments to the machine should be made between innings, with the agreement of both managers and the umpire.
- 2.2. An offensive coach will feed the pitching machine while their team is at bat. The offensive coach feeding the machine may not interfere with the defensive players. In the event of a pitching machine malfunction, a coach-pitcher shall pitch to their team.
- 2.3. The player fielding the pitcher's position shall take a position **five feet to the rear** of the pitching machine and **three feet to the left or right**. SMYB recommends that all players fielding the pitcher's position wear a protective heart guard and a face mask.
- 2.4. If a batted ball strikes the pitching machine:
 - a. And remains in fair territory, the ball is in play.
 - b. And goes into foul territory, the ball is dead, and the batter is awarded 1st base, and all runners advance one base from where they started.
 - c. If, in the opinion of the umpire, it would be unsafe for the pitcher to field the ball, the umpire shall declare the ball dead and award the batter 1st base and allow all runners to advance one base from where they started.

Fall Season

- 2.5. A batter shall be declared out after failing to hit a fair ball after six pitches. No exceptions!

Spring Season

- 2.6. A batter shall be declared out after failing to hit a fair ball after six pitches, unless:
 - a. A third strike is recorded before the sixth pitch is delivered.
 - b. A foul tip is legally caught for the third strike.
 - c. The sixth pitch or any subsequent pitch is hit foul without being legally caught.
- 2.7. No walks.

3. Game Guidelines

- 3.1. No new inning shall start after **1 hour and 35 minutes**.

A new inning will begin at the time the 3rd out or 5th run from the previous inning is recorded.

There is **no grace period** while teams take the field (e.g., if the 3rd out of the bottom of the 5th inning is recorded at 2:03 p.m., the top of the following inning begins at the same time).

- 3.2. Games will have a maximum of **6 innings**, unless a game is tied at the end of the sixth inning and the time limits specified in section 3.1 have not been reached. The 6th inning shall be played as an open inning (no 5-run maximum), only if it begins no later than 1 hour and 15 minutes from the start of the game. As soon as the 3rd out of the 5th inning is recorded, the umpire shall

check the game time. If the 5th inning is complete before 1 hour and 15 minutes from the start of the game, the umpire shall announce that the 6th inning is an open inning. In the event a game is tied after 6 complete innings and the time limits described in section 3.1 have not been reached, an additional inning(s) may be played. Games that are tied after the time limits will be recorded as tie games.

- 3.3.** A team must have at least **8 players** in proper uniform to start the game. After a game has started, a team may finish the game with fewer than 8 players. 10 defensive players are allowed on the field. The tenth player will be an outfielder and shall be positioned on the outfield grass a minimum of 5' beyond the infield cutout.
- 3.4.** All players present for a game shall play unless unable to play due to illness, injury, or suspension pursuant to the current By-laws. No player may play in games if they have any type of cast due to a previous injury. Games will include free defensive substitution and full-roster batting in an established batting order. Managers shall provide the opposing manager with a line-up card listing the players present and their batting order before the beginning of each game.
- 3.5.** No player may sit out more than one consecutive defensive inning, unless injured or ill. Each player shall **sit 1 inning** before any player sits for a 2nd inning. Each player must also play a minimum of 3 defensive innings, and **one** of the defensive innings must be in an **infield position**. In the event a player is unable to play due to injury or illness, it shall be documented in the Official Scoring book. No player shall be removed from a game mid-inning by the manager or coach and replaced by a player from the bench unless it is due to injury, illness, or disciplinary reasons. Once a player is designated as sitting during an inning, they must sit the entire inning unless needed to replace a player due to injury, illness, or disciplinary reasons.
- 3.6.** While their team is playing defense, the manager and coaches shall remain in their team's dugout. They may not enter the playing field unless the umpire grants a time-out. Only the base coaches and the coach feeding the pitching machine are allowed on the field while their team is at bat. If a manager or coach not specified in the previous sentence wishes to talk with a player at bat, they must ask the umpire for a time-out to enter the playing field. Positioning coaches or parents beyond the outfield fences to coach players is not permitted.
- 3.7.** No intentional bunts allowed. A player who intentionally bunts shall be returned to the plate and their action counted as a strike.
- 3.8.** No Infield Fly rule.
- 3.9.** Throwing any equipment will not be tolerated.
 - 1st Offense:** Player will be warned.
 - 2nd Offense:** Player will be ruled out.

4. Stopping of Play

The umpire will raise their hand to stop play and signify a dead ball when:

- The ball is in the possession of an infielder and, in the umpire's judgment, all play on a runner or runners has ceased.
- A force out or tag out is made in the infield, and no continued play is possible.
- When the umpire calls "time-out"
- Play will not stop until a runner reaches a base that they are forced to.
- The defense cannot call a timeout to stop an advancing runner.

5. Base Running

The distance between bases is approximately **60 feet**.

- 5.1.** No steals or leadoffs. A runner may not leave their base until the ball is hit. If a runner leaves their base before the ball is hit, the runner is out and the ball is dead.
- 5.2.** Pinch runners are not allowed, with the sole exception for an injured player.
- 5.3.** No dropped third strike.
- 5.4.** To ensure player safety, a runner advancing to any base where a defensive player is in position to receive the ball and make a tag **must either slide or avoid contact** with that defensive player.

Runner Requirements

When advancing to a base, if a defensive player is fielding or guarding the base with possession of the ball, the runner must take one of the following actions:

Slide: The runner must execute a legal slide if they choose to continue their attempt to reach the base.

Avoid: If the runner chooses not to slide, they must intentionally move to **avoid all contact** with the fielder who has possession of the ball, or retreat to the previous base.

Prohibited Actions

A base runner **shall not intentionally** use physical force to run into, strike, or attempt to knock down a defensive player who is in possession of the ball and attempting to make a tag.

PENALTY: If a base runner fails to "slide or avoid" contact in a situation described above, the runner shall be **immediately declared OUT**.

- 5.5.** Defensive players, including catchers, **cannot intentionally block a base or the base path** unless they are in possession of the ball or are in the immediate act of fielding or receiving a thrown ball.

Legal Blocking

A defensive player may block the base *only if* they already **possess the ball** or are actively in the **immediate process of receiving the throw** to make an out.

Illegal Blocking

Blocking the runner's path while *not* holding the ball, or pretending to receive a throw while not in the immediate process of doing so.

PENALTY: If a defensive player illegally blocks the runner's path (**Obstruction**), the umpire shall declare interference and award the runner the base they were advancing toward.

6. Equipment

The use of illegal equipment, including non-compliant bats, is strictly prohibited.

1. A manager who suspects an illegal bat should immediately notify the Plate Umpire.
2. The Plate Umpire will inspect the bat and rule whether it must be removed from play.
3. If the Umpire is uncertain, the bat **must be removed** immediately and submitted for review by the Division Director and Umpire Director.

1st Removal: If the bat is removed from play, the player and manager may stay in the game, but the player must use an approved bat. The Division Director and Umpire Director will be notified, and the incident will be noted.

2nd Removal: If the bat in question is returned to a game setting and removed a 2nd time, the manager is subject to the conduct committee.

Postseason Tournament Rules

All Pinto Spring Season regular rules apply to the postseason tournament, except where specifically amended below.

1. Games will be 6 innings unless shortened due to the application of the following mercy rule:
10-run mercy rule is in effect after four (4) complete innings (or three and one-half innings if the home team is ahead)
2. The last inning will be an open inning (with a maximum of 5 runs per inning before that). Since there's no time limit, the open inning will be the 6th inning.
3. Additional innings will be played until a winner is decided.

Same substitution rules apply (all players must play infield, all players must sit once before any player sits twice).