



Lincoln-Way Area League Pony Rules 2026

The following are the Lincoln-Way Area League baseball rules agreed upon by all organizations involved. Anything not addressed below can be found in the Official Pony Baseball Rules.

1. Regular Season Scheduling and Standings:

- 1.1. All games will start within 15 minutes after the posted starting time. If a team is not on the field, that team shall forfeit the game. Eight (8) players will constitute a legal lineup.
- 1.2. If there is no Umpire present within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time, both managers should select an adult to umpire the game.
- 1.3. When games are canceled, the home team League Director will be responsible for rescheduling games with the input of the two managers involved. We will do our best to have every team play a complete schedule (18 games plus playoffs in spring and 14 games plus playoffs in fall).
- 1.4. Regular season standings will be determined by winning percentage. Tie breakers will then be decided in the following order: head-to-head, runs against, coin flip.
- 1.5. See section-9 below for specific PLAYOFF rules and format.

2. Baseball Game Play:

- 2.1. A Pony baseball game is seven (7) innings in length. The only exceptions are: the time limit, the "Slaughter Rule" or weather. The Slaughter Rule is 15 runs after 4 innings or 12 runs after 5 innings. Games shortened by darkness are considered complete games.
- 2.2. Time limit is no new inning after 2 hours (from 1st pitch) for all games with the exception of weeknights when there are back-to-back games. When there are weeknight back to back games, BOTH games will be no new inning after 1:45 (from 1st pitch). IE- Monday 5:30pm game is no new inning after 2 hours unless there is also a 7:30pm game scheduled in which case there will be no new inning after 1:45.
*Saturday/ Sunday games will always be no new inning after 2 hours even when back-to-back games are scheduled. Time of first pitch should be noted by both managers and the Umpire and should be recorded in the scorebook. There is no hard stoppage. If an inning has been started, it will be completed.

- 2.3. **Eight (8) players will constitute a legal lineup.** There will NOT be an automatic out for the 9th spot in the batting order. If a player arrives after the start of the game, he can be added to the bottom of the line-up. If a team starts a game with 8 players and loses one to injury/illness, the game will continue on. If a player is injured/ill on any play in the course of a game and cannot continue, the player who recorded the last out shall be the pinch runner. If a player is removed from the game due to injury/illness, there is no automatic out for the player's spot in the batting order.
- 2.4. If the home team is winning when the time limit is reached, the bottom half of the inning shall not be completed.
- 2.5. Managers shall exchange batting orders (names and jersey numbers) at the beginning of each game and shall notify the opposing manager of players on the bench who are not fit to play.
- 2.6. Each player present must play in a defensive position at least four (4) innings in each game, assuming the game is not shortened by the Slaughter Rule or the weather. It is strongly encouraged that managers rotate their players as evenly as possible throughout each game so that games which are shortened by Slaughter Rule or weather do not result in the same kids playing less than 4 innings in such games.
- 2.7. A continuous batting order will be used and there will be free substitution of player defensive positions, except for Pitchers.
- 2.8. Leadoffs, stealing bases (including home), drop 3rd strike and the Infield Fly Rule (Umpire's discretion) are all in effect in the Pony Division.
- 2.9. Dropped 3rd strike rule will apply. The batter becomes a runner when the third strike called by an umpire is not caught in the air by the catcher providing (1) first base is unoccupied, or (2) there are two outs.
- 2.10. Balks will be called. There will be one (1) balk warning per pitcher per game. The 2nd and subsequent balks will be enforced, and base runners will advance. The pitcher will be given an explanation of the call by the Umpire. The Umpire can also explain the proper technique to the pitcher at the time of the call.
- 2.11. Bunting is allowed. *At no time will a batter be allowed to get in a bunt stance and then swing away at a pitch. If this occurs, the batter will be called out.
- 2.12. Pinch running is allowed only for catchers with 2 outs to speed up gameplay. The player who recorded the last out shall be the pinch runner.
- 2.13. A player must slide on a close play (or risk being called out) to avoid contact with a defensive player who is covering his base. Any contact greater than glove to body (Umpire's discretion) without sliding may result in the player being called out and the play being called dead at that point in time. Any time aggressive contact is made, the runner shall be ejected from the game.
- 2.14. A player who intentionally throws off his helmet while running the bases is automatically out. Any player or coach throwing any item of equipment may be ejected from the game subject to the discretion of the Umpire. Any player ejected from the game shall be an automatic out next time and subsequent times his turn to bat comes up.
- 2.15. Any manager, coach or player arguing with an umpire may be ejected from the game subject to the discretion of the Umpire. There is no "instant replay" or review. Do NOT tell Umpires to watch Game Changer video to argue a call. Any player ejected from the game shall be an automatic out next time and subsequent times his turn to bat comes up.
- 2.16. The first time a player "unintentionally" throws a bat while hitting, the player shall

be issued a “warning”. The second or any subsequent times that same player “unintentionally” throws a bat, the Umpire will call “dead ball” and the player shall be called “out”.

2.17. The Pitcher’s mound is 54 feet from home plate. Bases are 80 feet apart.

2.18. **Protest:**

A. protest based on a play which involves an umpire’s judgment shall not be permitted.

B. When protests are based on an interpretation of the rules, the objecting manager shall, at the time the play occurs, notify the head umpire and the opposing manager that the game is being played under protest, and submit the protest in writing to the league directors within 48 hours of the completion of the game.

(1) When protests based on the interpretation of a rule are upheld by the Decisions Committee, the game concerned shall be replayed from the point of protest.

(2) Umpires should make a public announcement to the crowd when a game is being played under protest.

C. Any team manager or other adult leader who withdraws a team from the playing field under any circumstances prior to the official completion of the game shall forfeit all rights to protests as prescribed in this section.

3. **Pitching Rules:**

3.1. Pitchers in the Lincoln-Way Pony in-house league are allowed up to 95 pitches per day with a maximum of four (4) innings per game, whichever comes first. A pitcher pitching to one batter in the 1st inning, getting three outs in the 2nd inning, getting three outs in the 3rd inning, and one batter in the 4th inning constitutes 4 innings pitched. Days of rest will be based on number of innings pitched. 1-2 innings pitched in a game requires no rest. 3 innings pitched in a game requires 1 calendar day rest. 4 innings pitched in a game requires 2 calendar day’s rest. There will be a 10-inning max per pitcher per week. The week will run from Monday to Sunday. Pitching rules will be strictly adhered to.

3.2. If the maximum pitch limit is reached while a player is hitting, the pitcher may continue until that player is either retired or has reached base. The pitcher then must be removed after the play has stopped. The manager is responsible for knowing when his/her pitcher must be removed. Keep an accurate pitch count, adhere to rest requirements, and share information with Part-Time travel coaches as well, if applicable, to ensure the health of the pitcher. Managers who are found to have been violating the above limits may be removed from managing/coaching duties by the League Director.

3.3. Any pitcher withdrawn from the mound and/or lineup, or a pitcher who is withdrawn from the mound and stays in the game at another position, shall not be permitted to pitch again in the same game.

3.4. Intentional walks are permitted. **Individual batters can only be intentionally walked once per game**. It will be a signal to the umpire, not 4 pitches.

3.5. Pitchers are not to wear sunglasses (except for prescription), batting gloves, white sleeves or drippy necklaces while pitching. Anything else which might be distracting to the batter is up to the Umpire’s discretion.

3.6. After a second Batter is hit by a Pitcher, a warning will be issued to both the Pitcher and his Manager. If a third Batter is hit, the Pitcher will be relieved of pitching duties.

4. Game Completion:

- 4.1 There will be a Slaughter Rule in effect for all games. If a team is winning by 15 runs after 4 innings or 12 runs after 5 innings, the game will be complete. If the home team is the one winning after the half inning, they do not need to bat.
- 4.2 If for any reason a game has been declared a forfeit, the game score shall be entered as 7-0.
- 4.3 If a game is called for any reason, it shall be considered a "complete" game if, five (5) innings have been completed (four and a half innings if the home team is winning) or the time limit has elapsed.
- 4.4 If a game is called due to weather in an uncompleted inning, after having reached "complete" game length (5 innings) and the visiting team ties the score or takes the lead in the uncompleted inning, and the home team does not tie the score or retake the lead in its portion of the uncompleted inning, the game shall be considered a "suspended" game and shall be continued from the point of curtailment. ***Once the inning starts (6th or 7th for example), if, and only if, the visiting team ties the game or takes the lead in the top of the uncompleted inning, then the home team gets a chance to finish the inning and tie the game or take the lead back or it's a "suspended" game***
- 4.5 If the visiting team was winning going into the inning and the top of the 6th has been played when a thunderstorm hits, then the game is "complete". If the home team is winning and the visiting team is batting in the top of the 6th when the game gets called due to rain, the game is "complete". A game will only be "suspended" if there is a tie or a lead change in the top of the inning.
- 4.6 All games are "suspended" games if they are stopped prior to the time limit or the completion of the fifth inning (or before four- and one-half innings are completed if the home team is ahead), with the exception of games shortened by darkness which will be complete games. All "suspended" games are subject to the Pony Rules governing its completion. For example, if a game is called for any reason before it is a complete game (for example, 2nd inning due to rain) as described above, it shall be considered a "suspended" game and shall be resumed from the point of curtailment. "Suspended" games should be picked up exactly where they were left off from and all pitching rules apply to that game. If a player was not present for a game that was "suspended" and is now present at the game when it is being continued, he may play in that game, but must be inserted last in the batting order.
- 4.7 Games resulting in a tie after being played to "completion" will be recorded as a tie game in the standings. If tied after 7 innings and NOT at the time limit, the teams will play extra innings until the time limit is reached or one team has won, whichever comes first.
- 4.8 WEATHER- Coaches and umpires need to be aware of lightning, whether lightning devices detect it or not. If lightning (flash or streak) is seen in the area, play will be suspended until there has been no presence of lightning for 30 minutes. If in doubt, suspend play.

5 Equipment:

- 5.1 **Bat rules- All Bats must have the USA or BBCOR Bat Stamp per Pony Rules (wood bats are**

also allowed).

- Barrel Size: 2 ¼” and 2 5/8” and barrel bats are OK. 2 -3/4” barrel are **NOT** allowed.
- BBCOR Stamp: If a bat is -3 it must be BBCOR certified (does not require the USA stamp) – This is per Pony Rule 8.C.2 and 8.C.3, 2018 rulebook.
- Legal Bats - USA stamped, BBCOR stamped and wood bats.
- Bats with the USSSA stamp or BPF 1.15 are **NOT** allowed.
- A player caught using an “illegal” bat will be called out and it is a dead ball if it was put in play. If a player is caught for a 2nd time in a game, the player is out and subsequently ejected from the game. A player that is caught bringing an “illegal” bat into the batter’s box will be out if caught. The ball does not need to be struck. This is a player safety issue.

5.2 All players must wear a protective cup at all times. This includes during games and practices.

5.3 Metal spikes are permitted.

6. Rosters, “Call-Ups” and “Subs”:

6.1. “Call-ups” must be registered players from the league below (Bronco) or “subs” (regular season only) from any other Pony team in the LW organization can be used to fill a roster. The “call-up” or “sub” cannot play ahead of a Pony Player, and may play if, and only if, there are less than nine (9) Pony Players present.

6.2. The Bronco “call-up” or Pony “sub” will not be allowed to pitch or catch, and they must bat last in the lineup.

7. Dugout Personnel:

7.1. A maximum of 4 adults are allowed in the dugout during games, Manager, two coaches and the team scorekeeper if necessary. Parents are not permitted to watch the games from the dugout area. Only 2 coaches are allowed outside the dugout area during game play. All other coaches must remain in the dugout.

8. Sportsmanship:

8.1. Any Manager and/or Coach arguing with an umpire may be ejected from the game subject to the discretion of the Umpire. Any Manager or Coach that argues with an umpire may be removed from his/her position, in the discretion of the League Director, after a hearing held by that organization’s Baseball Board of Directors. Each organization will handle per their own organization’s rules governing such incidents.

8.2. Team enthusiasm is encouraged. All player chatter must be positive and directed only towards their team and their teammates. At no point can a team chant towards their opponent. Examples include “hey batter-batter, swing”, “slaughter rule”, etc. If a team communicates negatively towards their opponent, the team Manager will be warned. If the issue occurs again, the team will forfeit the game and the League Director will address accordingly with the team Manager.

9. Playoffs Rules and Format:

- 9.1. Playoff format: SPRING & FALL Playoffs will be single elimination.
- 9.2. 2-hour time limit for ALL playoff games at all levels except the Championship games regardless of weeknight back-to-back games. No hard stoppages of games. Games are played until a winner has been decided, regular rules apply until the inning AND time limit is reached. Games going into extra innings will use the MLB extra innings rules (last batter from the previous inning assumes 2nd base, no outs, 0-0 count begins the inning).
- 9.3. No time limit on Championship games. No MLB extra inning rules will be used in the Championship game.
- 9.4. Slaughter rules are still in effect for ALL playoff games.
- 9.5. Only Call-ups from the league below (Bronco) will be allowed to play during the playoffs if a team has less than nine (9) players present.