



2026 VERMILION COUNTY PONY LEAGUE

Official Regulations

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Points of Emphasis

Pace of Play

All games should start as close as possible to their scheduled times. This is especially important for the first game of the evening when there is a game scheduled to follow. Coaches of both teams should be done with their pre-game warm-ups and be ready to start games on time.

Time in between half-innings should be kept as short as possible, and teams should be encouraged to hustle on and off the field. Coaches will be reminded to have their catchers ready when going back out on defense.

Sportsmanship

Managers and coaches are not only responsible for their own behavior during games, but also for those of parents, family members and other individuals associated with their team. If an umpire needs to address unsportsmanlike conduct involving a manager, coach, parent, family member or other individual, they shall be directed to the Head Coach of the team associated with the offender:

If a situation is deemed to be of a more serious nature, the game may be delayed while an ALYB Board Member is contacted. Umpires shall not address spectators directly if at all possible when encountering negative comments, behavior, etc.

Official Regulations

These regulations govern the conduct and operation of the Vermilion County Pony League. IHSA/IESA rules apply unless noted in these regulations.

REGULATION I – TEAM COMPOSITION

- (a) All players in the league must be fifteen (15) years old or younger as of midnight on May 1st of the current year.
- (b) American Legion teams are formed through a draft process once all paid player applications have been received.
- (c) Teams formed outside of the ALYB draft process and using the American Legion as their home field must have rosters comprised of players from the same community. Rosters must be reviewed and approved by the ALYB Board for any exception considerations.

NOTE: No players will be added to any Pony League team roster after June 1st.

IMPORTANT: Teams that accept their player registration payments through their home parks are formed in a way deemed appropriate by the officers of those parks. The American Legion Board has no jurisdiction over the methods through which those teams are formed, playing time, etc.

REGULATION II – PONY LEAGUE/IHSA ELIGIBILITY

- (a) IHSA By-law 3.101 prohibits a student from participating on a non-school team or in non-school competition in the sport or any skill of a sport at the time the student is a member of a school team in that same sport. American Legion Youth Baseball will ensure that this By-Law is being adhered to.

REGULATION III – GAME SCHEDULES

(a) The regular season schedule for the Vermilion County Pony League is normally distributed to all teams no later than the first part of May of each year. League Presidents will have an announced deadline to report any blackout dates for their park where teams are not able to play for reasons such as school concerts or other events where players may not be available. Once the regular season game schedule has been published, teams may only cancel and/or reschedule games due to inclement weather or other disaster-related events.

(b) All teams will normally be scheduled to play 1-2 games per week, with regularly scheduled games typically occurring Monday-Thursday evenings. Game times are 5:45 pm and 7:45 pm at parks where lighting is available.

(c) The President of the home team's park listed on the schedule is responsible to reschedule rain-out games. The home team has a seven (7) day grace period to reschedule the rained out game. Once the make-up time and date are set, a team's failure to play will result in forfeiture. Teams may use any day that is available and should make every effort to work with the opposing coach.

IMPORTANT: Teams may not cancel or reschedule their own games due to a lack of player participation or availability. Please see the Fielding A Team/Borrowing Players section.

REGULATION IV – FIELD PREPARATION

(a) The Home Team is responsible for striping the field. The baselines on the grass infield of the Legion Pony Field will be painted and should never be chalked.

REGULATION V – FOOTWEAR

(a) Metal spikes are not allowed in Pony League.

REGULATION VI – MANDATORY PLAYING TIME (LEGION-BASED TEAMS ONLY)

(a) Mandatory Play: During the regular season only, every player will participate in each game for a minimum of six (6) defensive outs and bat at least one (1) time in a seven-inning game. For the purposes of this rule, "six (6) defensive outs" is defined as: A player enters the field in one of the nine defensive positions when his/her team is on defense and occupies such position while six outs are made; "bat at least one (1) time" is defined as: A player enters the batter's box with no count and completes that time at bat by being retired or by reaching base safely.

PENALTY: The player(s) involved shall start the next scheduled game, play any previous requirement not completed and the requirement for the current game before being removed.

The manager shall for the:

A. First Offense – receive a written warning.

B. Second Offense – a suspension for the next scheduled game.

C. Third Offense – a suspension for the remainder of the season.

NOTE 1: If the violation is determined to have been intentional, a more severe penalty may be assessed by the Board of Directors. However, forfeiture of a game may not be invoked.

NOTE 2: There is no exception to this rule unless the game is shortened for any reason (i.e. weather, darkness, or the 10-run rule), at which time the League may elect not to impose a penalty on the manager/coach. However, the player would still be required to meet the requirements of the penalty described previously by starting the next game and completing both previous and current game requirements.

REGULATION VII – FIELDING A TEAM/BORROWING PLAYERS

(a) A team may start a game with eight (8) players and can finish with seven (7). An out will be recorded for the open spots in the lineup. If a player leaves the game due to an injury, an out will not be recorded for his batting position. If a player is removed from the game by a parent or umpire for disciplinary reasons, an out will be recorded in the vacated position. A team cannot start a game with seven (7) players.

(b) A Pony League team may pull up a twelve (12) year old from their home park only if that player(s) will not miss a game on their 12U team that evening. The maximum borrowed players allowed are three (3) per night and that player(s) may not pitch and must bat in the lowest spot(s) in the batting order. Twelve (12) year old players can only be used to fill up to the 9th roster spot.

NOTE: Each team/league is responsible for penalties for players/coaches that intentionally breach this rule. The ALYB Board supports players moving up to play Pony league baseball but feel that the player's commitment should be to their regular season team.

REGULATION VIII – HITTING RULES

- (a) Each coach must declare at the beginning of the game if they will be batting nine (9) players, or all players present. If a team bats all players present, free substitutions will be allowed. If a team bats nine (9), a player may only reenter the game in the same batting position that he vacated. A hitter may be (not mandatory) designated for any one starting player (not just pitchers) and all subsequent substitutes for that player in the game (See NFHS 3-1-4)
- (b) Coaches will use the numbers and last names of the players on their lineup card.
- (c) If a team is batting nine (9) players (not all players present) and a player is injured, the last player to be removed from the game can replace the injured player.

REGULATION IX – PITCHING

- (a) The pitching distance shall be 54 feet from the front of the rubber to the back tip of home plate.
- (b) A pitcher may not pitch more than a total of seven (7) innings in any one day. One pitch in an inning is considered an inning pitched.
- (c) Any pitcher pitching four (4) or more innings in a game cannot pitch in the next scheduled game if that next game is within the same playing week (Sunday-Saturday).
- (d) Ten (10) innings will be the maximum total number of innings a pitcher may pitch in a given week. For purpose of reference, Sunday through Saturday is a week.

NOTE 1: Rainouts and make up games are considered part of the week they are played in.

NOTE 2: Any pitcher (either the starting pitcher or any relief pitcher) withdrawn from the mound or game may return to the pitching position once per game.

NOTE 3: A team that intentionally uses a pitcher who has exceeded the allowable innings for the week or day shall forfeit the game. If it is found to be unintentional the pitcher shall be removed from the mound at the time it is discovered that the pitcher is ineligible, and the game shall continue from that point.

REGULATION X – OFFICIAL GAME/TIME LIMIT

(a) The ten-run rule is in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 10 runs or more after 4 ½ innings, or after the 5th inning, if either team is 10 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat. A 12-run rule is in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 12 runs or more after 3½ innings, or after the 4th inning, if either team is 12 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat. A 15-run rule is also in effect and the game shall end when the visiting team is behind 15 runs or more after 2 ½ innings, or after the 3rd inning, if either team is 15 runs behind and both teams have had an equal number of times at bat.

(b) There will be a 1 hour 45-minute time limit on all games except the Postseason Tournament Championship Game. The umpires are responsible for monitoring the time limit on all games.

(c) In the event that a game enters extra innings, each team shall place the player who is listed in the lineup immediately preceding that inning's leadoff hitter on second base.

REGULATION XI – BAT RULES

(a) Bats must meet the latest IESA Regulations as defined in the IESA Exceptions to National Federation Rules (NFHS 1-3-2) that went into effect 11/13/18.

The following bats are **legal** for use in IESA/Pony League contests:

- a. Any non-wood bat containing a silkscreened or permanently marked BBCOR label as detailed in section 1-3-2 of the NFHS baseball rules book or;
- b. Any bat 30 inches and under that has a greater than minus three drop and a barrel diameter of 2-5/8 inches provided that bat contains the USA Baseball logo or;
- c. Any wood bat that meets the NFHS standards as detailed in section 1-3-2 and 1-3-3 of the NFHS baseball rules book.

NOTE 1: All bats 31 inches and over must meet the NFHS bat guidelines and contain the BBCOR label.

NOTE 2: All bats with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter are illegal.

NOTE 3: Any bat with a USSSA logo is illegal.

Examples of Legal and Illegal Bats That Do Not Contain a USA Baseball Logo			
Length	Weight	Barrel Diameter	Status
31	28	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	22	2-3/4"	Illegal—Maximum barrel diameter is 2-5/8". Additionally this bat will not contain the BBCOR label
30	20	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
29	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	20	2-1/4"	Illegal—A 31" bat must contain the BBCOR label and meet all other NFHS standards
28	19	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	28	2-3/4"	Illegal—Maximum barrel diameter is 2-5/8". Additionally this bat will not contain the BBCOR label.
29	26	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	27	2-5/8"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
32	22	2-1/4"	Illegal—A 32" bat must weigh at least 29 oz. and all other NFHS bat standards including a BBCOR label
31	25	2-1/4"	Illegal—All bats 31" and over must meet the NFHS standards and include a BBCOR label
30	27	2-1/2"	Legal assuming BBCOR labeled
30	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal

Examples of Legal and Illegal Non-Wood Bats That Are Marked With a USA Baseball Logo			
Length	Weight	Barrel Diameter	Status
30	20	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
31	20	2-5/8"	Illegal—All bats 31" and over for use in IESA contests must meet NFHS guidelines including BBCOR label. It does not matter if this bat has a USA Baseball logo. A 31" bat has to be BBCOR labeled.
28	18	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
29	18	2-1/4"	Illegal—No bat with a 2-1/4" barrel diameter is legal
31	21	2-5/8"	Illegal—All bats 31" and over for use in IESA contests must meet NFHS guidelines including BBCOR label. It does not matter if this bat has a USA Baseball logo. A 31" bat has to be BBCOR labeled.
27	15	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
29	19	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat
30	18	2-5/8"	Legal assuming USA Baseball Logo is silk screened on bat

REGULATION XII – BASE LENGTHS

(a) Base paths shall be 80 feet in length (per IESA Exceptions).

REGULATION XIII – COURTESY RUNNER

(a) A courtesy runner is allowed at any time for the pitcher and catcher positions. The courtesy runner must be a sub (if team is batting only 9 players) or the last recorded out (if the team is batting everyone). This is not mandatory but recommended to speed up play.

REGULATION XIV – PROTEST

(a) Protests shall be considered only when based on the violation or interpretation of a playing rule, the use of an ineligible pitcher, or the use of an ineligible player. No protest shall be considered on a decision involving an umpire's judgment. Equipment which does not meet specifications must be removed from the game.

(b) The managers (or acting manager) of contesting teams only shall have the right to protest a game.

(c) Protests shall be made as follows:

(1) The protesting manager shall immediately, and before any succeeding play begins, notify the umpire that the game is being played under protest.

(2) Following such notice, the umpire shall consult with the other umpire(s). If the umpire is convinced that the decision is in conflict with the rules, the umpire shall reverse that decision. If, however, after consultation, the umpire is convinced that the decision is not in conflict with the rules, said umpire shall announce that the game is being played under protest. Failure of the umpire to make such announcement shall not affect the validity of the protest.

NOTE: Any team manager 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.

(d) Protests made due to use of ineligible pitcher or ineligible player may be considered only if made to the umpire before the umpire(s) leave the field at the end of the game. Whenever it is found that an ineligible pitcher or ineligible player is being used, said pitcher shall be removed from the mound, or said player shall be removed from the game, and the game shall be continued under protest or not as the protesting manager decides.

(e) Any protest for any reason whatsoever must be submitted by the manager first to the umpire on the field of play and then in writing to the ALYB President within 24 hours. The umpire-in-chief shall also submit a report immediately. Such notification can be made to bhengsen@alyb.org. All protests will cost \$50 and checks should be made out to ALYB. All protest revenues will be used to offset the costs of the end of the year tournament and will in turn reduce the amount charged to participating leagues. If the protest is upheld, the \$50 will be returned to the team filing the protest.

(f) A committee composed of the ALYB President, Presidents from the leagues involved, the league's umpire-in-chief and one or more other officers or directors who are not managers or umpires shall hear and resolve any such protest as above, including playing rules. If the protest is allowed, the game shall resume from exact point when infraction occurred.

NOTE 1: Individuals that have a vested interest in the outcome will not be asked to participate in the vote.

NOTE 2: The committee may solicit testimony and advice from any source it chooses, but the actual decisions shall be based on the majority vote of the committee. When feasible, the committee will make every effort to render a decision within 48 hours of the receipt of the protest in written form.

REGULATION XV – EJECTIONS

(a) Any player/coach ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct shall be ineligible for the next game. At that next game, the player/coach may be present at the game site but is not allowed in the dugout or within the confines of the field before, during or after the game.

REGULATION XVI – GAME SCORE REPORTING

(a) The Home Team is the official scorer. The Home team must report all scores through the Online Score Reporting Form available on the American Legion Youth Baseball website.

(b) Any posted scores that are disputed should be reported to Brian Hensgen, ALYB President at bhengsen@alyb.org or 304-2761.

REGULATION XVII – POSTSEASON TOURNAMENT

(a) A limited number of teams will be eligible for the post-season tournament. This number will be determined prior to the start of the regular season and communicated to all head coaches.

(a) Seeds will be determined by the overall team winning percentage. If there is a tie, then we will use the head-to-head record. If that cannot break the tie, then runs allowed will be the tie breaker. A coin flip will determine the higher seed if none of the previous tie-breaking methods are effective.

(b) All pitchers will start fresh with innings allowed for the postseason beginning the first day of the tournament. Any pitcher pitching four (4) or more innings cannot pitch in the next game. There is not a maximum number of innings in the tournament.