

**PROTECT OUR  
NATION'S YOUTH**



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#### Mission Statement

PONY Baseball and Softball is designed to "Protect Our Nation's Youth" by providing experiences in youth baseball and girls softball that will help young people grow into healthier and happier adults.

PONY is a non-discriminatory organization, which prohibits actions against an individual or league on the basis of race, sex, creed, religion or national origin.

# PONY BASEBALL

*Instructional Leagues*



5-6



7-8



## SHETLAND

**SHETLAND LEAGUE** is an instructional league to teach five and six-year-old players the fundamentals of baseball by the simplest method possible - letting them play the game. If this purpose is kept paramount, Shetland League can be a valuable addition to the more formally organized leagues for older players. Emphasis must be on instruction, not on the league championship.

Shetland League coaches are allowed on the field to offer instruction during the game. The rules require that players be given the opportunity to try different positions, and that all of them get to play in every game.

Players in this age range have a short attention span in any single activity and games must move rapidly. Only the basic fundamentals of the game should be brought out. It is not uncommon for players of this age, initially, to be unfamiliar with which is first base, which is third base, and which field is left and which is right. Lack of knowledge indicates merely that the player has not yet been introduced to the game and has no relationship to the player's potential athletic ability.

Shetland League was developed more than 40 years ago as a Tee-Ball League, using a batting tee instead of a pitcher. There is considerable medical opinion that players of this age who actually pitch may develop arm and/or shoulder injuries that may not be evident until several years later. In addition, pitchers of this age often have control problems, resulting in longer games which may become boring to the participants.

Shetland League provides an excellent opportunity to teach basic catching, throwing, batting and fielding, and a love of the game of baseball without making the experience a course of intensified instruction. The best approach is to let the teams play with little thought to victory or defeat, but merely for the joy of participation while, at the same time, learning the fundamentals of teamwork, group discipline and sportsmanship.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Bases - 50 feet

Pitching: Pinto baseball - 38 feet

**Fair Play Area** - Within the first base and third base foul lines and a fence or marked line 150 feet from home plate. A ball hit beyond that distance on the fly will be a home run. A minimum home run distance of 125 feet or a maximum of 200 feet will be recognized, with the recommendation that the home run distance be 150 feet at the foul lines and 200 feet in center field to a six or eight foot barrier wherever possible.

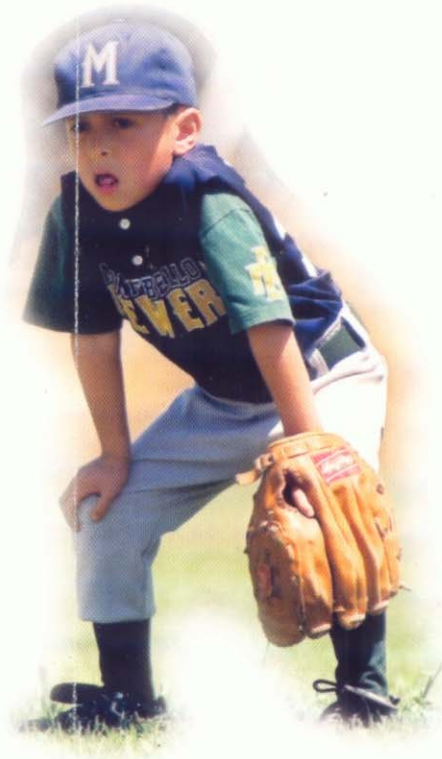
**Bases, Plates** - The home plate, pitcher's rubber and the bases shall be official size as used in regulation baseball.

**Pitching Mound** - Shall be raised by a gradual slope to a height of four inches above the level of home plate and the base paths.

**Restraining Line** - Located along first base, beginning 25 feet from home base and extending three feet beyond the first and second base line. The line, paralleling the first base foul line and extending three feet (36 inches) into foul territory, shall be marked with chalk or other white material two inches wide.

**Distance to Backstop** - Recommended distance from home plate to the backstop is 20 feet.

**Catcher's Box** - By local option, the catcher's box may be rectangular in shape 43 inches wide and eight feet deep from the point of home plate or it may be triangular in shape extending eight feet from the rear of home plate, being a continuation of the foul lines, in which case the line closest to the backstop shall be 16 feet in length.



## PINTO

While **PINTO LEAGUE** players may pitch two innings of a game, it is recommended the pitching core be handled by coach-pitchers, or a pitching machine. If the Shetland League is not used in your community, it may even be good to start Pinto League players with the batting-tee, switching to the coach-pitch format in the latter part of the season.

Shetland and Pinto leagues are full members of PONY, receive supplies and the full support of the headquarters staff and Field Director organization. International tournament play is not conducted at these age levels. Leagues may play in regional invitational tournaments, but it is recommended they do so with regular season team rosters. The focus should remain on training more than competition.

Shetland and Pinto teams may be attired in cap and t-shirt rather than full baseball uniforms. The cap and t-shirt will thrill a beginning player almost as much as a full uniform, will leave the player the added thrill of receiving a full uniform for a later day, and will prevent excessive demands on the league budget.

Managers and coaches at this level must be concerned with the development of all of the players on their team. These are training leagues and the development of a player's skill and personality must remain the prime goal of the manager and coach, rather than the winning of a league title.

Every effort should be made to place every player who registers for the program on a team in these early years, and every effort should be made to play every player on the team in every game.

