Pony Division Rules

All participants are allocated to teams of approximately 12-13 players. Teams will practice once per week. Each team will play one or two games per week lasting six innings or a maximum of two hours, with no inning starting after 1:45. Each team will play no more than 10 fielders (six in the infield, four in the outfield). There is a must play rule meaning that every player must play at least 3 innings in the field per game.

Rules for Pony League

Official Little League Rules as outlined in the "Official Regulations and Playing Rules" booklet will be observed at all times, except for the rules adopted by the Mahopac Baseball Association (MSA), and described below:

Playing time: All players attending a game are required to play a minimum of three (3) innings in the field. Innings need not be consecutive. This rule may be waived by a coach if a player or players are injured or sick. A maximum of 3 innings are allowed in the same position per player. The exception to this rule is for the Pitcher and Catcher. See Pitching Rules.

Coach Pitch: Coach from offensive team will pitch for the first Two Innings. The offensive team will also have a Coach behind home plate to retrieve the ball if it gets by the Catcher and throw it back to the coach who is pitching. The Pitching Coach may also keep a bucket of balls by the pitcher's mound during the first Two Innings to speed up the game. A Pony player will play the position of pitcher and will be positioned next to the pitching coach. Play will stop when the ball is thrown into the vicinity of the pitching coach.

Roster Batting During Coach Pitch Innings: The Team's entire roster will bat for each of the first two innings. Each batter will be allowed 3 swinging strikes and balls will not be counted. If the batter is not swinging at strikes, he will be warned and the next pitch in the strike zone and not swung at, will be counted as a strike. After 3 strikes, the batter's next swing will be off a tee.

Kid Pitch: The Third Inning will start with a 0-0 tie. Beginning in the Third Inning, players

will pitch and score will be kept. Each batter will be allowed 3 strikes. Both Swinging Strikes and Called Strikes will count during Kid Pitch Innings. The team at bat will be allowed 3 outs (strikeouts will count). The inning will end after 3 outs. Play will stop when the ball is thrown into the vicinity of the pitcher.

Walks: During Kid Pitch Innings, there will be NO WALKS. After four balls, the batter's coach will pitch, and the strike count will revert to zero. After 3 swinging strikes the batter is out. If pitcher is removed (for coach pitch) three batters in a row, the batter's coach pitches the rest of the half inning.

Roster Batting During Kid Pitch Innings: A team's entire roster will bat in order throughout the entire game. A half inning will end when the defensive team records three outs, a maximum of five (5) runs are scored, or when eight (8) offensive players have batted, whichever comes first. If the 8th batter bats with less than 2 outs, his at bat is treated as if there are 2 outs. If a player leaves the game for any reason, their spot in the batting order is skipped without penalty. Unlimited runs may be scored in the 6th inning only.

Defensive Players: A maximum of ten (10) defensive players are allowed on the playing field at any time. Excluding the pitcher and catcher, a coach may only have four (4) additional players in the infield. All outfielders are required to be in position on the outfield grass. Coaches are encouraged to move players around to various positions during the game.

Substitutions: Defensive player substitutions may be made freely throughout a game. However, once a player has been removed from the game as a pitcher, he may not re-enter the game as a pitcher.

Game Schedules: The Pony League game schedule, as determined by the Pony League Commissioner and the Director of Scheduling, will be strictly adhered to. Coaches will not be allowed to reschedule games for any reason unless authorized by and handled by the Pony League Commissioner. Games will have a 2-hour limit, with no inning starting after 1:45. Ties will be counted in the standings.

Game Umpires: All individuals involved with the Pony League Baseball program should show respect for all our umpires. There will be one Umpire at each Pony game. He will call Balls and Strikes from behind the mound.

Field Responsibility: It will be the responsibility of the coaches to provide 4 volunteers for field prep 30 minutes prior to a scheduled game as per the schedule provided by the Pony League Commissioner.

Field Dimensions: Pitching Distance is 42 feet from the apex (back point) of home plate to the front edge of the pitching rubber. Baseline Distance is 60 feet.

Baseball: MacGregor #56 Official Tee Ball

General Rules of Play

1. A team's head coach will identify to the Umpire their coaches prior to the game. Only 4 MSA certified coaches are permitted in the dugout or coaching the bases. All other person's (parents, siblings, friends, etc.) are requested to remain away from the bench area, from behind the backstop and away from the field of play.
2. All male players must wear a protective cup. A protective cup is MANDATORY for all catchers, including those players who warm a pitcher between innings. Additionally, any player warming up a pitcher, either on the field or on the sideline MUST wear a catcher's mask. This is a safety issue and will be strictly enforced.
3. All batters and base runners must wear batting helmets — NO EXCEPTIONS. This is a safety concern and will be strictly enforced.
4. JEWELRY OF ANY TYPE IS NOT PERMITTED TO BE WORN ON THE FIELD. This includes, but is not limited to, watches, rings, pins, earrings, necklaces, or other metallic items. If your child is seen wearing jewelry during the game, the game will be stopped, and they will be asked by the umpire to remove it before play can resume. Medical bracelets or necklaces are the only exception, and it is suggested that these items be left on or near the team bench whenever possible.
5. All pitching changes will be given 8 pitches to warm-up. Please try to warm up all potential pitchers on the sideline to ensure proper warm-up time.
6. All bats must be wooden or have a USA Baseball certified label. For a full list of USA Certified Bats please visit: https://www.usabaseball.com/bats. If an illegal bat is found during a game, the bat will be removed and both teams will be issued a warning on the use of an illegal bat. If a second illegal bat is found during a game, the bat will be removed and the player using the bat as well as the coach will be ejected from the game. Further instances of the use of an illegal bat can lead to expulsion from the Mahopac Baseball Association. THIS IS A SAFETY ISSUE AND WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED BY THE MSA.
7. An official game will consist of at least 3 1/2 innings (where the home team is leading at the conclusion of 3 1/2 innings of play), or 4 innings (if the visiting team is leading at the end of 3 1/2 innings, and the home team is given their at-bats in the fourth inning.) The 2 Coach Pitch Innings will count towards this official game minimum inning requirement. An official game can be called in this manner if bad weather or darkness forces the end of the game. Games that are tied after 4 innings or more have been played, and are suspended (due to bad weather) will result as a tie in the Standings. As noted above, all general pitching rules will remain in effect for suspended games.
8. Once a game has started, the Umpire will have the sole discretion to call a game because of darkness or bad weather with input from only the head coaches. If the possibility of

lightning exists, the game MUST be suspended, and the players removed from the field until the threat of lighting has passed.

9. As noted above, our umpire crews are made up of young adults, some who are only in middle/high school. These individuals should be respected, even when a bad call is made. **THE ABUSE OF UMPIRES IN ANY FORM, VERBAL OR PHYSICAL WILL NOT BE TOLERATED BY THE MSA AND IS IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF THE MSA CODE OF CONDUCT.** Individuals found to be abusive to umpires, whether it is coaches, players or parents will be asked to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Where the abuse continues, the offending individual will be asked to leave the area surrounding the ball field. Future occurrences of abuse can lead to further disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the MSA. These young people should be praised for their commitment to youth baseball in Mahopac. We may not agree with all the calls they make, but they have offered their services when others have not. We should encourage their involvement in the MSA baseball program and offer constructive comments when appropriate. Arguing balls and strikes will also not be tolerated.

10. Protests will not be allowed.

11. A team must consist of a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game. Teams not having at least eight (8) players at the start of the game will forfeit the game. Forfeit time is fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled start of the game. Score in the standings for forfeited games will be 6-0. In the event that this happens, the coaches are encouraged to play the game with the team having the more complete roster, supplying the "defensive players" for the team that is short. The "defensive players" will still bat with their team and will rotate when their spot in the order comes to bat. In games where a team is reduced to seven players or less during the game, the opposing team shall provide ball players to be used as **designated defensive players.** These players will not bat for the team they are helping out. They are only defensive replacements. We hope that this situation does not occur often during the season. If the Commissioner sees a pattern of non-attendance of players, the Commissioner will discuss this with the coach that is involved. A Pony team may borrow players from another Pony team to avoid forfeiting and can only borrow enough players to avoid forfeiting. The head coach must inform the other team who are the borrowed players prior to the game. The borrowed players may only be from other Pony teams and not from other divisions. Borrowed players are not allowed to pitch. Borrowed players should bat at the end of the order. If during the game, a roster player arrives, the borrowed players can still play and bat in their spot in their order, but the roster players should be used for defense first. The results of a game involving borrowed players count in the standings. **NO BORROWING PLAYERS DURING THE PLAYOFFS, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

12. In an effort to speed up the game, coaches have the option to use a substitute runner when the team's catcher, pitcher, OR INCOMING catcher is on base and with any number of outs; however, it is not allowed DURING AN AT BAT. The substitute runner shall be the last player on the team to make a batted out. The intent is to reduce the delay between innings when the catcher needs to put on their equipment after being on base.

13. Bunting, and stealing is not permitted in the Pony League Division. Base runners cannot advance on Wild Pitches or Passed Balls. Tagging up on a fly ball is permitted.

14. Leaving a base before a ball has been hit into play is not allowed. When the umpire sees

this infraction, the umpire will issue a warning to the coaches of both teams. If a base runner leaves a base early again, the umpire will call the base runner out. The umpires are the only individuals that can call this play. If an umpire does not see the runner leave a base early, then the runner has not left the base early. Coaches and players are prohibited from arguing this call with the umpires from the bench!

15. **ALL BASE RUNNERS MUST SLIDE FEET FIRST** when advancing to second base, third base, or home plate when a defensive play is being made at those locations. Where a base runner fails to slide or intentionally runs into or over a defensive player, the base runner will be declared out. For the safety of the player, head first sliding is prohibited. If a player over runs a base they may go back head first. When any of these situations occur, the umpires will issue a warning to both teams. If a similar play occurs again in the same game, the offending player will be ejected from the game.

16. Catchers are prohibited from blocking home plate from a base runner by kneeling on the third base line- whether they have the ball or not. Again, this is a safety concern. Catchers who have received a throw from the field are allowed to straddle the third base line in front of home plate and wait for the runner to slide. By straddling the third base line, the catcher can still apply the tag before the base runner reaches home plate. With the catcher in this position, there is less likely the chance of injury to either the catcher or the runner sliding into shin guards. Where the catcher illegally blocks home plate from the base runner, the base runner will automatically be awarded home plate, and the run will be scored. Where the catcher is awaiting a throw from the field, they should set up on either side of the third base line. This set-up position by the catcher while awaiting the throw reduces dangerous collisions at home plate while still allowing the catcher to make a play on the runner advancing to home plate. In addition, obstruction shall be called if a runner does not have access to any bag or home plate. The runner could/will be awarded 1 base. A defensive player cannot block a base without a ball.

17. If the batter throws their bat either on the swing at a pitched ball, or after being called out by the umpire, the batter will be issued a warning. Should the same batter throw their bat a second time, the batter will automatically be called out for that plate appearance. If the batter throws the bat a third time, the batter will automatically be called out and ejected from the game.

18. Base runners will be awarded one base on throws into dead-ball territory. At their own risk, Base Runners can only advance 1 base due to an overthrow on any single continuous play. Example: If a base runner advances to second on an overthrow to first, the play is dead even if the defense overthrows again to second.

19. The infield-fly rule will not be used in the Pony League. Any pop-up within the infield is considered a live ball and the runners advance at their own risk.

20. On—Deck batters are only allowed in the fenced in area next to each bench in the Pony Division and only one player may be in that area. This is a safety issue and will be strictly enforced. Coaches will receive a warning for a first violation and possible suspension if the violation occurs again. Coaches should gather all bats from players before the game and place them in designated location.

PITCHING RULES

1. Players are permitted to pitch a maximum of two (2) innings per game, or forty (40) pitches per game, whichever comes first. If a pitcher reaches 40 pitches he may finish the batter. Any innings played at the catcher position will count against the two (2) innings limit and will reduce the number of innings the player may pitch (e.g. 1 inning at catcher = 1 fewer inning pitching). Players cannot throw more than 25 pitches in one inning. Players cannot throw more than four (4) innings in a calendar week. A calendar week runs from Monday through Sunday. Delivery of a single pitch in an inning constitutes an inning pitched. A first grader must pitch either 3 consecutive outs or allow 3 runs prior to the end of the 4th inning. Therefore, a first grader must start fulfilling this requirement by the fourth inning.

2. If a player pitches a single pitch in a game, that player will be required to have one full calendar day to rest before they can pitch again. A full calendar day begins at 12:01 AM on the day following the pitch and ends at 11:59 PM. (EX. A player who pitches on Monday is not permitted to pitch again until Wednesday, regardless of how many innings they pitched).

3. Any violation of this rule, with the exception of a suspended game, will result in a forfeit by the team in violation.

4. Any question on the pitching eligibility of the player should be settled prior to the first pitch of any game (for a starting pitcher), or before the first pitch of any relief pitcher entering the game or after the game has started.

5. The only exception to Rule 2 will be in the event of a suspended game where the pitcher in the game may be allowed to continue the game that was suspended. This is providing that one (1) calendar day of rest is provided and that the pitcher has not pitched more than four (4) innings in that calendar week. A calendar day starts at 12:01 A.M. and continues for 24 hours.

6. Breaking balls of any kind are not allowed. If the umpire feels that a breaking ball was thrown deliberately, they will call the pitch a ball and deliver a warning to both coaches. If the umpire determines that a pitcher then throws another breaking ball, the umpire will remove the pitcher from the game and the player will not be allowed to pitch for the remainder of the game.

7. All pitchers must throw from the rubber.

8. Balks are not called in the Pony League Division.

9. Intentional walks are not allowed in the Pony League Division.

10. Coaches are allowed two (2) visits to the pitcher per inning. The only exception

to this is due to injury. On the second visit, the coach must replace the pitcher.

11. A pitcher is allowed a maximum of two (2)-hit batsmen per game before they must be replaced. When replaced, the player cannot return to pitch in that game.
12. Travel Coaches must submit a list of Protected Players to the In-House Directors prior to the In-House Draft or Team Selection. Travel Coaches can update this list of Protected Players at any time during the In-House Season. Travel Coaches must first obtain the approval of the Player's parents before they add them to the Protected Player's list to ensure the Parents are okay with their child not being allowed to pitch during the In-House Season.