



Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: What do acronyms “AFPBA” & “PONY” stand for?

A: The Ahwatukee Foothills PONY Baseball Association (AFPBA) - an Arizona corporation formed to provide a community-based program...

Protect Our Nation’s Youth (PONY) - A National Organization celebrating over 50 years experience in youth baseball.



Q: How is PONY Baseball different from Little League Baseball?

A: The primary features that distinguish PONY Baseball from Little League Baseball are the use of two-year age bracket system and scaled diamond sizes.

Organizations such as Little League can vary in age by as much as three years within a division. With players of only two ages it is far easier to permit every player to play more positions since the difference in skills with age group is not that great.

PONY scales the size of the diamond to match the physical capabilities of the players within the division.

League	Age	Base Paths	Pitching
Shetland	4 - 6	50 ft	-
Pinto	7 - 8	50 ft	38 ft (machine)
Mustang	9 - 10	60 ft	44 ft
Bronco	11 - 12	70 ft	48 ft
Pony	13 - 14	80 ft	54 ft
Colt	15 - 16	90 ft	60 ½ ft
Palomino	17 - 19	90 ft	60 ½ ft

The age-specific diamonds allow the players to make all of the plays made by professional players. Home runs become a possibility. The double play, squeeze play, hit and run, and other tactics that is difficult for adult players on a full-size diamond, become part of the game for our players.

Another difference is PONY allows lead-offs and stealing bases at the upper levels of Mustang league and older.

Q: How are teams selected?

Shetland – All players will be assigned to teams on a random basis, with the attempt of equalizing the number of 4, 5 & 6 year olds. Team requests can be made, but no commitment is made that those requests will be honored. Siblings within the division will be assigned to the same team, unless otherwise requested by the parents.

Pinto - All players will be assigned to teams on a random basis, with the attempt of equalizing the number of 7 & 8 year olds. Team requests can be made, but no commitment is made that those requests will be honored. Siblings within the division will be assigned to the same team, unless otherwise requested by the parents.



Mustang, Bronco & Pony – Teams are selected by try outs and a draft selection. No player may request assignment to or selection by particular team. Siblings within the division will be assigned to the same team, unless otherwise requested by the parents.

Q: Are evaluations mandatory?

A: ALL candidates for the Mustang, Bronco & Pony divisions MUST attend evaluations. Any player unable to attend evaluations will be given an opportunity to attend a makeup evaluation, at a time and location to be announced. Evaluations are not “tryouts.” Everyone who registers on time is placed on a team. Evaluations are simply used to help coaches draft players, and evenly spread the talent among the teams.

Q: Can player request to play up a division?

A: Yes, a player can request to play up one division; as long as the player is within one year in age of the requested division, they have a previous coach’s endorsement and have played in the AFPBA PONY League for at least one season.

Q: How often will practices occur?

A: During the spring league prior to the season beginning teams will usually practice twice during the week and once on the weekend. You should expect practices to last two hours. On occasion, coaches may schedule additional practices to continue to develop players skills.

Q: How long will the season last?

A: The spring season (approximately 18 games) usually lasts about 10 to 12 weeks, and is extended 3 to 4 weeks for those selected to participate on all-star teams.

Q: Is it permissible for a player to participate in other sports while playing baseball for AFPBA PONY League team?

A: While participation in other sports or activities is not prohibited or even discouraged by the AFPBA PONY League, parents should understand that PONY League baseball does entail a time commitment and it is a team sport where your actions may have a team impact.



Q: Does AFPBA PONY League offer reduced or waived fees?

A: Fees are reduced for three players or more per family (\$25 per participant). Fees may also be reduced or waived for hardship. A request can be sent directly to League President or Player Agent. Contact info is located on web page...

Q: What equipment will my child need before the first practice or game?

A: The registration fee provides each player with a Replica Jersey, Hat, Socks & Practice T-shirt. A uniform consists of a pair of baseball pants, a baseball jersey, a hat, a belt, and an athletic supporter/ cup (mandatory) and pair of baseball socks. Be sure to check with your manager prior to buying new pants for the season. NO METAL CLEATS...

Q: If child does poorly at evaluation session will he / she be cut?

A: In all divisions, all children participating in a player evaluation will be placed on a team during the draft.

Q: Can you request to have child held back in lower division?

A: Yes, if you wish to keep your child in a lower division instead of playing in the respective age group, you must write a letter to the board prior to evaluations. Upon review at evaluations, you will be notified if you have been granted your request. Many times at evaluations parents see that their child is on same level as peers and withdraw request.

Q: Is the Pinto Division an instructional or competitive division?

A: This is the player's first introduction to competitive baseball but the primary focus of the Pinto League is instructional. Wins and losses are not officially tracked but the competitive element does creep in. If you believe your child's manager or coach is becoming too intense and demanding of the children on the team please contact division director.



Q: Are umpires for AFPBA PONY league paid or volunteer?

A: Most of the umpires for the league are paid for. It is AFPBA PONY giving back to the community; most of our umpires are high school age ball players who have come up through the ranks in the AFPBA PONY League.

Q: Who should I contact if interested in umpiring?

A: Please contact the Umpire Director (on contact page) if interested in becoming an umpire.

Q: What can be done about unruly spectators at games?

A: Umpires may stop the game and require that any unruly spectators leave the area immediately before the game continues. All parents and spectators are expected to comply with AFPBA PONY Code of Conduct that is posted on this website and at the concession stand at the field.

Q: Who oversees the AFPBA PONY League?

A: The AFPBA PONY League President OJ Liberta (ahwatukeepony@gmail.com) is responsible for the overall league program. A board is in place to discuss issues and vote on changes. The board is a "working committee" in that each member must serve a greater role to running the league than simply being a coach or interested parent. A detailed list of positions can be found on the contact page.

Q: Why does registration occur so early?

A: We hold registration in mid January to allow enough time for all the pre-season planning and scheduling, coach recruiting, assignments and training, equipment and uniform ordering, team formation, etc.. There is an enormous amount of work done by volunteers behind the scenes prior to the season starting.

Q: Why are there different fees for different age levels?

A: Different age levels have different needs and costs such as equipment and umpiring related fees.



Q: Why do we require birth certificates at registration?

A: We do so for safety reasons and to ensure that all players are participating in the division that is appropriate for their age.

Q: How are coaching assignments determined?

A: Coaching assignments are made by our Coaches Committee with the approval of the league President. Assignments are taken very seriously as we look for responsible adults who will be good role models for the players, have strong organizational and communication skills, and that commit to being knowledgeable to the rules that apply to their league. Coaching evaluation forms can be downloaded from the web.

Q: Who determines the rules?

A: The rules are determined by the National PONY organization, with minor modifications made by the AFPBA PONY League board to best meet the needs of our players.

Q: Who determines who plays in All-Star games?

A: Coaches nominate players from their own team to participate in the All-Star game.