

Shetland League (T-ball) Rules

General Rules

Review Parents and Coaches Handbook for 2020 prior to reviewing these General Rules. Share these rules with players and parents.

1. Sportsmanship shall be the #1 priority for coaches, players, and parents.
2. All players in Yearling, Mustang and above are required to wear an athletic protector (cup).
3. Teams will be set by a draft. Refer to draft rules on setting of teams.
4. All coaches and parents helping on the field must be certified in concussion and heat illness training before working with players.
5. Coaches are encouraged to instruct parents and players to be positive to both teams. (It is ok to stress to parents not to coach from the stands as this is a safety issue. If the child is watching for instruction from a parent, they are not listening to their coach and injuries could occur.)
6. Players shall be encouraged to hustle on and off the field at all times.
7. Please do not allow the batters to stand outside the dugout, in the dugout entrance, and please do not allow the players to climb the dugout fence at any time.
8. Coaches shall provide their batting order to the other coach at least 10 minutes before the game starts. **Shetland League does not need to provide batting orders.**
9. Prior to all games, the umpire and both head coaches will conduct a coin flip to determine which team is home and which team is visitor during regular season scheduled games
10. Each team shall keep a score book. Umpires are not responsible for knowing the score. Umpires are responsible for time limit, calling outs and decisions on runners advancing and scoring. (*You may have a volunteer to keep track of your scorebook.*) Those keeping the books are encouraged to check with opposing team's book at the end of half innings. Home team book is official.
11. There are no protests. Umpire's rulings are final.
12. No player, coach or parent at any time, throw equipment or use inappropriate language.
 - a. First offense is a verbal warning.
 - b. Second offense is automatic ejection from the game.
 - c. Third offense will result in suspension, along with a meeting with the Board of Directors.
13. California Rule extra innings will be played in the tournament only as needed. See "California Rules" listed on website.
14. All games will be pursuant to all USSSA rules.
15. All bats must be approved with USA or USSSA stamp. No wooden bats permitted.
16. Weather cancellations during a game, will be rescheduled when possible. During the regular season, games will be official after 3 complete innings or the home team is up and batting is not needed to win. Tournament weather related rules will be sent prior to the start of the tournament.

17. Use the player substitution rule on website as needed. All coaches will assist a team with players as needed.

18. Up to 3 coaches in the dugout at one time for Mustang, Bronco and Pony leagues. 3 coaches and a parent helper for yearling and Shetland league.

Shetland Specific Rules

1. Games are typically 3 innings, or 55 minutes. Coaches are to use judgement on starting another inning as to end the game at no more than 60 minutes long.

2. The base path is 50'. Pitching block will be at 35 feet. Coaches can come as close as needed for batters in need to deliver 4 soft toss pitches before moving to tee as needed.

3. There are no umpires for this age group. There are no outs, safes, or scores in this game. This league is strictly teaching fundamentals at this age.

4. Coaches must rotate player positions every inning and all players must get the same amount of playing time in the infield and outfield.

5. Teams are created to be smaller numbers to enhance learning. Teams are encouraged not to cancel due to low numbers for field a team. Each team is set with 6-8 players ideally.

14. Always encourage players, as this is a learning basis for them.

Offensive Rules

1. All offensive players are required to wear a helmet with a mask while on field. This includes all base-runners, hitter and on-deck hitter.

2. Each player will be given no more than 4 pitches and if a player does not hit one of the 4 pitches, the tee will be brought out and the same player will hit off the tee. (Typically, all teams will start the year using the tee and introduce pitching as your team progresses. Coaches from both teams shall discuss this before the game. It is acceptable for one team to use the tee while the other pitches. Each coach will determine when their team is ready to advance to soft pitches for each player. It is desired for all coaches to be pitching to all players by the end of the season.

3. For each pitch or swing from the tee, the offensive coach shall announce for all players to be ready.

4. Players will advance to one (1) base only until the last batter who will run all the bases to home.

5. Each team will bat their lineup. The offensive coach will announce the last batter. Defense shall remain on the field until the last runner crosses the plate.

6. While on Offense, there will be one coach who assists with loading the Tee and positioning the batter. One coach will be soft pitching. One coach will be a first base and one coach and 3rd base coach to help direct the runners. There must be at least one parent helper assisting with the dugout to get the players lined up and on deck and to receive the players off the field after they arrive at home plate.

Fielding Rules

1. While on defense, there can be up to 3 parent helpers that stand at the lip to help with communication to the players on staying alert and how to play. Parents are to avoid assisting with the play by catching or stopping the ball.
2. The 'pitcher' position will be required to wear a helmet with a cage.
3. It is important for players to make sure the fielder is looking before throwing the ball to them.
4. It is encouraged that parents get involved as parent helpers/shadowing and instituting the correct skills for their own child and the position with which they play. Instruction is always encouraged throughout the game but must not impede the play of the game. Be quick with instruction and keep the players moving.
5. It is encouraged that the players play real positions, which will include pitcher, first, second, shortstop, third, and outfielders, left, center left and center right and right field. The outfield will stand just inside the lip in the dirt as most balls do not cross into the outfield. In the event there are not enough players, you may use the infield positions only, and ask parents to 'secure' outfield. There is no catcher position at this age.
6. When the ball is played in the infield, it is encouraged that the players throw the ball to first base. In the event the ball goes to outfield, it is encouraged that the players throw the ball to the infield as appropriate. Coaches shall direct players where the ball should be thrown.