



# GURNEE YOUTH BASEBALL FAQ'S

## **1. What is Gurnee Youth Baseball, Inc.?**

Gurnee Youth Baseball, Inc., (“GYB”), is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a quality baseball program for over 800 boys and girls (ages 6 to 17), most of which reside within the community. GYB provides a developmental, appropriately competitive and safe environment for the purpose of the enjoyment of the game by all participants.

## **2. When does the GYB in-house baseball season start and end?**

Teams start practicing in early April, weather permitting. Regular season games, in which player development is stressed, begin in late April and continue through late June or early July. In the Pinto and older age divisions, the season concludes with a competitive playoff series, which finish up on “Championship Saturday” in mid-July. We also offer “Fall Ball” which begins in late August and ends in mid-October with a “championship” for children who will play in Mustang, Bronco, or Pony leagues in the upcoming season.

## **3. Where do players have to live to be eligible to play in GYB?**

Players must live within the boundaries of Warren Township High School (District #121). GYB does allow players from outside these boundaries to participate for additional “out of district” fee.

## **4. What do players need to bring to practices/games?**

All players must bring their own mitts. A water bottle is recommended, although refreshments are generally available for purchase on game days. Male players participating at the Pinto level and above must wear athletic supporters and cups. Players may bring their own bats and batting helmets if they wish. GYB does provide each team with an adequate number of bats and helmets. Players should be dressed appropriately for the weather and wear clothing that is loose fitting to allow them to move about comfortably. Every player will receive a complete major league replica uniform, which includes a hat, jersey, pants, and socks. Although not required, GYB recommends that players wear cleats (rubber at the Bronco level and below) and a protective mouth guard.

## **5. Where are the games played at?**

Most games are played at the American Legion fields. Some Pinto games are played at Gowe Beach field. Some Mustang and Bronco games may be played at Russell or Viking Parks. All Pony games are played at O’Plaine or Warren Township Parks.

## **6. Can my child be placed on a team with his or her friends?**

If your child plays in the Shetland or Pinto leagues, we will attempt to honor a request for team placement. However, we cannot guarantee that all requests will be granted. The GYB registration form contains a space for you to indicate: (1) players you would like your child to be placed on the same team as; (2) a particular coach you would like your child to have; and/or (3) a particular team you want your child to be on.

## **7. How often will my child play games and practice?**

Your child's team will generally play two games per week on the days listed below:

- a. SHETLAND – Any weeknight and some Saturdays (Fields T-1, T-2, or T-3 at the Legion)
- b. PINTO – Any weeknight and some Saturdays (Field 2 at the Legion and Gowe Beach)
- c. MUSTANG – Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings and Saturdays – Fields 3, 4, 5, or 6 at the Legion with some games at Russell and Viking Parks.
- d. BRONCO – Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturdays – Fields 3, 4, 5, or 6 at the Legion with some games at Russell and Viking Parks.
- e. PONY – Any weeknight and Saturdays – O'Plaine and Warren Township Parks.
- f. COLT – Any day – Faulkner Field at the Legion

Practices for in-house teams may be conducted anytime your coach can obtain a field, weather and field conditions permitting. GYB will attempt to schedule practices and practice games (generally two per week) for all teams (usually on their scheduled nights to play) beginning in April and concluding prior to Opening Day. Coaches may practice any day that they can get a field and the weather permits though. Practices for in-house teams are rare once the regular season games begin, especially for the younger leagues. For older leagues, some coaches schedule intermittent practices (especially around play-off time).

## **8. How will I know if a game is rained out and when it will be made up?**

GYB make every reasonable attempt to play games when they are scheduled. However, in the event that this is not possible, GYB will announce postponements as early as possible during the day (generally this will be by 3:00 pm on weekdays; 7:00 am on Saturdays; and noon on Sundays) so that players can be notified in a timely fashion. Sometimes it is not possible to make this decision until just before game time. When games are cancelled, the league supervisors call the head coach of every team playing that day or night. Postponements of games played at the Legion fields will be announced on the GYB weather hotline.

Postponements of games played at Park District fields will be announced on the park District weather hotline. Postponements of games played at Warren Township Park will be announced via the Warren Township website. In the event that the hotlines are not updated, you should assume that the game is still being played and show up at your scheduled field at the time your coach told you to be there. Makeup games are generally scheduled for Saturday and Sunday evenings. When possible, make-ups will be posted on the GYB website. When this is not possible, please obtain make-up information from your coach or team parent.

## **9. What are the differences between the leagues?**

The 2 younger leagues (Shetland and Pinto) are non-competitive, instructional leagues. No game scores or league standings are recorded, with the exception of the end of the season Pinto tournament. The purpose of these leagues is to teach the players the basic skills necessary to play the game and to have fun. Emphasis is placed on learning the rules of the game and the correct techniques of batting, fielding, and throwing. More competitive play begins at the Mustang level and continues as the players progressively advance throughout the rest of the leagues. Players' skills are further developed in these leagues. Game scores and league standings may be recorded in these leagues. Teams also participate in an end of the season playoff, which will conclude on Championship Saturday.

- a. SHETLAND (6/7 year olds) – Instructional with coaches pitching
- b. PINTO (8 year olds) – Instructional with batters hitting balls pitched from a pitching machine
- c. MUSTANG (9/10 year olds) – Introduction to competition with players pitching
- d. BRONCO (11/12 year olds) – Competitive level of play continues.
- e. PONY (13/14 year olds) – Competitive level of play continues.
- f. COLT/PALAMINO (15 to 17 year olds) – Competitive level of play continues.

## **10. What are travel teams, tournament teams, and All-Star teams?**

Tournament and All-Star team opportunities are offered to the older players in GYB (Mustang and older). Competition at this level is normally higher than at the in-house level. Additional fees and costs are generally associated with this level of play as well as commitment to more practices and games while still being a part of an In-house team.

- a. Travel Teams – GYB does not presently sponsor travel teams. Travel teams don't play in-house games. They play in a travel league. Currently Warren Township has the Warren Township Blue Devils Travel Baseball team for children starting at age 9 or 10. More information is available through the Warren Township website. GYB is NOT affiliated with this organization.

- b. Tournament Teams – Tournament team tryouts are open to all GYB in-house players in the older leagues. Players on these teams continue to play on their in-house teams as well. They play in regional tournaments (most have a 3 game minimum) during and after the in-house season concludes. Tournament team alternates may be called up to play in some tournaments.
- c. All-Star Teams – All-star team players play in one All-Star game during the season. Players from Travel and Tournament teams are not eligible to play in the GYB All-Star game. Players are selected from their coaches to represent their individual in-house team.

## **11. What are evaluations and how do they differ from tryouts?**

Evaluations are conducted during January prior to the start of each season. All Mustang, Bronco, and Pony League players must attend and participate in the evaluation process. Players are typically evaluated on their fielding, throwing, batting, and pitching skills. The results are computed by League Commissioners for use at the player dispersal draft at which time teams are formed. A player's evaluation score determines, in part, the round in which the player gets drafted onto a team and helps even out the talent level on all teams.

Tryouts are conducted during the spring for interested players at the Mustang, Bronco, and Pony levels who are interested in a more competitive level of play on our Tournament teams.

## **12. How are players placed on teams?**

For the non-competitive levels (Shetland and Pinto), teams are formed based on the following criteria:

- a. Shetland & Pinto – The respective league Commissioners attempt to keep players together on the same team if they were previously together. If a child is new to the league, then player, coach, or team requests are considered and every attempt is made to honor these requests, but this will not always be possible. If there aren't any requests, then players may be placed by geographic boundaries or by the school they attend.
- b. Mustang, Bronco, Pony, and Colt/Palomino – Teams are formed via player dispersal drafts.
- c. Tournament Teams – Players make these teams based upon tryouts they must attend. Tournament team tryouts are held in the early part of the season for which the team will be playing. Tournament teams practice and play their games on weekends. There are additional costs involved with these teams for uniforms and participation fees.

- d. All-Star teams – Players are selected to represent their in-house team (usually by the coaches) in the GYB All-Star game. (some teams allow the players to vote for their team representatives.) Every team usually has at least 2 representatives play in the all-star game which is scheduled on a weekend in the middle of the baseball season.

**13. When will I find out what in-house team my child is on?**

At older levels, coaches are asked to contact their players within 48 hours of the draft. Shetland and Pinto players are contacted no later than mid-March. If you do not hear from a coach in what you believe to be a timely fashion, please contact the appropriate league commissioner to determine your child's placement. You can contact them via email through the GYB website.

**14. Are regulation baseballs used in Shetland?**

Shetland players play with a baseball that has a soft-core center.

**15. What is "Field Day"?**

The Shetland League does not have end of season playoffs like the other leagues. In the alternative, GYB provides a day when the children can compete in an individual skills competition. The areas they compete in are: accuracy throw, base speed, and hitting distance. Please contact the Shetland Commissioner for further information.

**16. Can I get a refund if my child decides s/he doesn't want to play after s/he has been signed up?**

You may get a full refund if your child leaves the league prior to the first game of the season for their team. A \$25.00 processing fee will be assessed however. Once the season begins, NO REFUNDS will be given to any player leaving the league unless there is a special circumstance such as a documented injury or sickness that would **prevent** the child from playing baseball the rest of the season. If you believe that special circumstances apply in your situation, please contact the League President who will assess your request.

**17. What is P.O.N.Y. Baseball?**

PONY Baseball, Inc. is the corporate name of a national program under which Shetland, Pinto, Mustang, Bronco, Pony, Colt, and Palomino Leagues are operated in baseball and softball. PONY is taken from the first letters of each word in the slogan, "Protect Our nation's Youth".

## **18. How is PONY Baseball different from Little League Baseball?**

The primary features that distinguish PONY Baseball from Little League Baseball are the use of a 2-year age bracket system and scaled diamonds. In organizations such as Little League, players can differ by as much as three years within a league. As a result, the younger players, because of their lack of maturity, ability, and size find it hard to communicate with the older players. Generally, they find themselves spending a disproportionate amount of time on the bench and may feel disconnected from their team. With players of only two ages involved, as is the case with PONY Baseball, it is far easier to permit every player to play more positions since the difference in skills within the age group is not that great. The game of baseball cannot be played as it was intended to be played if the physical capabilities of the players do not match the physical achievements required for the game. Little League uses two diamond sizes. Up until age 12, players play on a 60-foot diamond. PONY Baseball, on the other hand, scales the size of the diamonds to match the physical capabilities of the players within each division. The base dimensions for PONY baseball are as follows:

- a. 50-foot for PINTO
- b. 60-foot for MUSTANG
- c. 70-foot for BRONCO
- d. 90-foot for Pony and up

The scaled down diamonds allow players to make plays made by the major leaguers. Home runs become a possibility. Outfielders can play in a position proportionately equal to that played by a major leaguer, and the double play, squeeze play, and various strategy tactics, difficult for adults and nearly impossible for youngsters on a full size diamond, become a probability rather than impossible.

## **19. What is Gurnee Youth Baseball's Volunteer Policy?**

Please see the actual GYB Volunteer Policy in full to answer any questions you may have regarding our volunteer program. It can be found in the Volunteer section of our website or you can ask the Volunteer Coordinator for a copy.

## **20. What field will my child be on?**

Check the Gurnee Youth Baseball website for complete schedules. You can also contact your coach directly.

## **21. What if my child cannot find a part of his/her uniform for practice or for a game?**

You may use another baseball cap, shirt, and/or pants for the game until you can replace the missing item(s).

**22. We have a conflict with an upcoming event that is happening during a scheduled game. Are games ever rescheduled to accommodate such conflicts?**

Unfortunately we cannot reschedule games, as there are simply too many other functions to reasonably schedule around. On almost any given day, someone may have a scheduling conflict that occurs because of school or family functions. Moving a game may work for some people, but in turn, cause a problem for others.

**23. There are no available fields to practice on. Where are teams supposed to practice?**

The best time to practice is one hour prior to your game. If your team plays at 6 pm, then arriving at 5 pm will allow your team one full hour of practice and many practices over the season.

**24. Why do travel teams play on our fields?**

Gurnee Youth Baseball actually contracts out some of our fields on days when we do not need the fields for our games. This is one way that GYB earns income to help operate our organization.

**25. Why can't we park in the American Legion parking lot?**

While the American Legion is a sponsor of Gurnee Youth Baseball, GYB's property is strictly the fields behind the Legion Hall. The Legion depends on its available parking for its patrons. If there is no parking for their patrons, then the Legion actually loses business. Your car will be towed and you will be responsible for all related expenses if the American Legion verifies that you are parked on their lot because of baseball.

**26. When is registration held for Gurnee Youth Baseball?**

Registration for the upcoming spring season is usually held the end of October / beginning of November. Walk-in registration takes place at the American Legion Hall and forms for registering are available on-line and at the Legion Hall during registration times. (For faster service, we recommend that all forms be filled out PRIOR to arriving for registration) Exact dates and times will be listed on the HOME page of GYB. If your child is new to GYB a copy of the birth certificate is needed for our records. At least two checks are required, one for registration fees and the other for the buy-out fee or volunteer deposit. (You will need one of these checks for each child registering; up to 2 children.) All registration inquiries can be made to the GYB Registrar via email thru out the year and also by phone during registration times. Fall registration begins usually by the end of July.

*Please Note: While we have tried to list the most frequently asked questions here, there might be some we have missed. If after reviewing this information you still have a question(s) that is unanswered, please email the GYB Board Member that is best suited to assist you (via the GYB website). If you are unsure as to whom to contact, please email the President or Executive Vice President and they will ensure your question(s) is addressed in a timely manner.*

*Information updated October 2007*