

**PALOS BASEBALL ORGANIZATION
HANDBOOK
2009**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Palos Baseball Organization 2009 Trustees	Page 3
Concession Stand Policy	Page 4
PBO Game Control & Field Decorum	Page 6
Game Cancellation	Page 6
General Field Rules for PBO Play	Page 7
Game Rules	Page 8
2009 Playoff Pitching Rules	Page 12
Special Pinto Safety Rules of Play	Page 16

2009 PBO Trustee List

President:	Scott Ladewig	sladelaw@sbcglobal.net
Vice-President	Jim Beese	jbeese@4ppts.com
Treasurer:	Anthony Belmonte	antbel28@sbcglobal.net
	John O'Sullivan	JOSullivan@coletaylor.com
	(associate)	
Secretary:	Gary Krammer	Gary.krammer@effem.com

Tim Burger	gburger@artic.edu
Carol Burke	cburkedogsit4u@sbcglobal.net
Ken Glotz	kenjul83@aol.com
Tom Gregory	tomgregory99@comcast.net
Nick Karas	nkaras@amfusa.com
Mike Kaufmann	mkaufmann@oaklawn-il.gov
Mike Lee	mlee@tawiusa.com
Jim Lizzio	cucuzz1697@yahoo.com
Rick Mundo	richard.mundo@chsd218.org
Tim O'Connell	generators@ameritech.net
Bob Peters	bepeter88@aol.com
Mark	MKJA4@comcast.net
VanNiewenhuyse	
Butch	schwartzkopf3@att.net
Schwartzkopf	

CONCESSION STAND POLICIES – 2009

Our concession stand is a major factor in generating revenue for PBO used to improve the league and defray expenses. Every family is REQUIRED to work one shift in the concession stand per player. This can be a positive and fun experience if you approach your shift with the proper attitude.

Managers and “Team Moms/Dads” will receive a schedule listing each team’s assigned dates to staff the concession stand. The schedule will also be posted in the PBO Office. **MANAGERS** – please designate a Team Mom/Dad as soon as possible and provide them with a copy of the Concession Stand Policies – 2009. **THE STAFFING OF THE CONCESSION STAND IS ULTIMATELY A MANAGER’S RESPONSIBILITY.**

GENERAL POLICIES:

- Each team will receive two assigned dates to provide six (6) workers for a 4 to 4.5 hour shift.
- Four (4) of the workers will work in the concession stand under the supervision of a concession stand supervisor.
- Two (2) of the workers will be assigned “Waste Management” duty and shall be responsible for emptying garbage cans and picking up trash and litter around the park during their shift.
- The manager or Team Mom/Dad is required to provide a completed Concession Stand Staffing Sheet listing the names and phone numbers of their team’s workers a minimum of one (1) week in advance of their scheduled date. A form for that purpose will be provided which will designate who will work in the stand and who will have “waste management” duty. The completed form may be turned in to a concession stand supervisor or dropped off in the PBO Office in the box marked CONCESSION.
- **WORKERS MUST BE ON TIME!** Weekday shifts are from 5-9 pm or 9:30 pm as needed. Saturdays have three separate shifts: 8 am – 12:30 pm, 12 – 4:30 pm and 4 – 8:30 pm. During the beginning of each shift the Concession Stand Supervisor will train the workers and explain their duties for the shift. This is especially important this year due to new procedures being implemented as a result of the new concession stand and increased scrutiny from the health inspector.
- **ABSOLUTELY NO CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED IN THE STAND.** This is for their safety and yours. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Parents are the preferred workers. However, a 14-year old or older **FAMILY MEMBER** may work to fulfill a family’s obligation. No team may have more than two (2) teen-aged workers (14-19 years old) on any given shift.

- **CAN'T MAKE YOUR ASSIGNED SHIFT?** If you cannot make your assigned shift, you can make alternate arrangements by doing the following:
 1. Switch shifts with another parent.

THE PBO CONCESSION STAND PHONE NUMBER IS 361-4320

No replacement Workers will be Available to take your Assigned Shift.

NO SHOWS – The policies for NO SHOWS may seem harsh, but they have become necessary in order to assure that the concession stand is properly staffed.

MANAGERS – it is ultimately your responsibility to be sure that your team fulfills their concession stand duty. Failure to do so ultimately hurts the league as a whole. Stress to your Team Mom/Dad and the parents the importance of showing up for their assigned concession stand duty.

1. If a worker does not show for their assigned shift, they are obligated to pay the concession stand \$ **50.00**. In addition, the family's PBO player will be suspended for their next game. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** While this policy may seem harsh, it has become necessary in order to assure that the concession stand is properly staffed.
2. If more than two (2) workers from any one (1) team fail to show for their shift (without replacement workers), that team will **FORFEIT** their next game. Again, payments of \$ **50.00** each are required.

PBO GAME CONTROL & FIELD DECORUM

AUTOMATIC EJECTION

An umpire may eject, without warning, a player, coach or manager for use of profanity, destruction of PBO property or equipment or any act of physical violence. Such acts may carry additional game or season suspensions. Umpires shall notify a PBO trustee immediately after the game and submit a written report to the PBO Trustees within 24 hours of the incident.

WARNING PRIOR TO EJECTION

An umpire may eject a player, coach or manager after one (1) warning for throwing equipment such as helmets or bats, unsportsmanlike conduct or harassment of the umpire.

FORFEIT

An umpire may declare a forfeiture of a game for the following reasons:

1. Failure of a team to field nine (9) players after 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time.
2. Failure to complete a game that has not been officially called by an umpire.
3. Failure to comply with an umpire's directive to remove a fan, coach, player or manager previously ejected from within the umpire's field of vision.

Each manager is responsible for the actions of his team's fans, coaches and players.

If a fan, coach or player makes a negative comment to anyone other than his or her own team, the umpire will identify the disruptive person and a warning will be given to the manager. The manager will then have five (5) minutes to correct the problem. If unable to do so, the manager may ask for a PBO Trustee to assist. If the manager does not attempt to do so, the game will be forfeited. The umpires shall then notify a PBO Trustee and file a written report with the PBO Trustees within 24 hours of the incident.

GAME CANCELLATION

In the event of inclement weather prior to the start of a game, the decision to play will be made by a PBO Trustee. Once the game has started, the decision to suspend and/or resume play will be made by the PBO Trustees.

The PBO Trustees will reschedule a game suspended by inclement weather if the required number of innings have not been played to qualify as an official game. The game will resume at the point it was suspended and with the exact situation present. Managers need to record the exact point of suspension and report to a PBO Trustee.

A pitcher who has pitched in the suspended game and had been removed may not pitch the continuation of that game. The pitcher who was currently pitching when the game was suspended may continue to pitch as long as doing so does not violate the established Pitching Rules for that age division.

Players that were not present at the suspended game may play in the continuation of that game provided they bat at the end of the batting order and can play three (3) defensive innings without breaking the MINIMUM INNING RULE.

GENERAL FIELD RULES FOR PBO PLAY

- The home team is listed second on the league schedule.
- The home team has the third base dugout.
- Each team will have five (5) minutes on the field prior to the game. The home team has the field first.
- A discussion of the ground and playing rules should take place before the start of the game between the managers and umpires.
- During the game, only managers may question to umpire. Coaches must remain within three (3) feet of the dugout or in the coach's box, if coaching first or third.
- No smoking is allowed on the field or in the dugout.
- No soft toss with league balls is allowed against any fencing at the PBO complex.
- No hidden ball trick.
- Bats and helmets must be kept in the dugout. When a team is at bat, all players must remain in the dugout (except "on deck" players), except for retrieving bats.
- **Dugouts and the stands must be cleaned up after each game by both teams.** Managers must be responsible for cleaning up the dugouts and stands after each game. If this is not done, the team playing after your game may lodge a complaint with a PBO Trustee. The PBO Trustees will then decide on what type of corrective action will be taken.
- Each manager must make every effort to control the actions of their players, fans and coaches.

- Players, managers and coaches are not allowed to yell or make negative comments about an opposing batter before, during or after a pitch.
- **NO BATTING PRACTICE** will be allowed on the field prior to a game.
- NO alcoholic beverages are allowed at the PBO complex.

GAME RULES

All divisions shall play by the Official Baseball Rules, Sporting News Edition, with the following exceptions explained below. The changes identified herein supercede the Official Baseball Rules and are to be followed for all regular season and play-off games.

1. TIME RULE

Weekdays – No new inning shall start 2 HOURS AND 15 MINUTES after the start of the game upon the umpire’s direction only.

Weekends – No new inning shall start 2 HOURS after the start of the game upon the umpire’s direction only.

Time limit rules will be strictly enforced. Please note the exact time of the start of the game with the opposing manager and the umpire as the game commences. If a game has ended because of time limit restrictions the score is tied, **THE GAME OFFICIALLY ENDS IN A TIE IF THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF REQUIRED INNINGS HAVE BEEN PLAYED (AS SET FORTH BELOW). NO CONTINUATION OF GAMES ENDED BY THE TIME LIMIT RESTRICTONS ARE ALLOWED IF THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF INNINGS FOR AN OFFICIAL GAME HAVE BEEN PLAYED.**

An official Pinto or Mustang game is six (6) innings in length. If the time limit has expired, or because of inclement weather, an official game will be three and one-half (3½) innings when the visiting team is behind after four (4) times at bat, and four (4) innings when the home team is behind after three and one-half (3 ½) innings.

An official Bronco or Pony game is seven (7) innings in length. If the time limit has expired, or because of inclement weather, an official game will be four and one-half (4 ½) innings when the visiting team is behind after five (5) times at bat, and five (5) innings when the home team is behind after four and one-half (4 ½) innings.

IF THE TIME ELAPSES ON THE GAME AND IT HAS REACHED THE NUMBER OF INNINGS REQUIRED FOR AN OFFICIAL GAME, THE GAME IS CONSIDERED COMPLETE.

2. SLAUGHTER RULE

PINTO AND MUSTANG – If one team has a lead of ten (10) or more runs after the opposing team has come to bat four (4) complete times, the game will be declared a slaughter, and will end. The TEN BATTER RULE will not apply to the last bat of the home team if behind by ten (10) or more runs.

BRONCO AND PONY – If one team has a lead of ten (10) or more runs after the opposing team has come to bat five (5) complete times, the game will be declared a slaughter, and will end. Bronco and Pony do not have a ten batter rule.

3. TEN BATTER RULE

PINTO and MUSTANG teams are limited to ten (10) batters per team in any one (1) inning. **EXCEPTION:** In the last inning of any game or the last inning of a shortened game due to the time limit rule or slaughter rule, the TEN BATTER RULE does not apply. In shortened games, the umpire must notify both managers prior to the start of the last inning that the TEN BATTER RULE will not apply.

THE TEN BATTER RULE APPLIES TO ALL REGULAR SEASON AND PLAYOFF GAMES.

THE TENTH BATTER IN AN INNING MAY SCORE. If the 10 batter in an inning puts the ball in play by hit, he/she and any runner on the bases may score and a hit ball will remain in play until the third out in the inning is recorded or the ball is in the possession of the pitcher or fielder and that player is standing on the pitching rubber. The final advancement of the runners will be determined as set forth in Rule 11, “STOPPING PLAY: PINTO AND MUSTANG ONLY” on Page 15.

4. MINIMUM INNING RULE

Each player **MUST** play defensively in the field a minimum of **THREE (3) FULL INNINGS** in Pinto and Mustang Divisions and **FOUR (4) FULL INNINGS** in Bronco and Pony Divisions. These required minimum innings do not need to be consecutive. **EXCEPTION:** The MINIMUM INNING RULE shall not apply when a game is shortened by slaughter rule, inclement weather or when your team is the visiting team and home team does not bat in the bottom of the last inning.

All player changes must be done before the first pitch of the inning unless there is an injury.

If a base runner is removed due to injury, the last batter to have made an out must replace him. The opposing manager must be notified anytime that an injured player needs to be removed from the game.

PINTO AND MUSTANG DIVISIONS – EVERY PLAYER MUST PLAY AT LEAST ONE (1) INNING IN THE INFIELD. A PLAYER CANNOT SIT OUT MORE THAN ONE (1) INNING CONSECUTIVELY. EVERY PLAYER MUST BAT IN THE LEAD-OFF POSITION AT LEAST ONE TIME DURING THE SEASON.

ALL DIVISIONS – EVERY PLAYER MUST PLAY IN THE FIELD IN AT LEAST ONE (1) OF THE FIRST TWO INNINGS. NO PLAYER CAN SIT OUT FOR BOTH THE FIRST AND SECOND INNING OF ANY GAME.

5. SUBSTITUTE RUNNERS

The catcher will be allowed a pinch runner to speed up the game. The pinch runner can only be utilized with two (2) outs. The pinch runner must be the player from that team who made the last out.

6. ROSTER BATTING

All rostered players must take a regular turn at bat for the entire game. If a player must leave the game for an injury or for any other reason, there are two options.

1. The manager may keep the player's batting spot open by taking an automatic out every time that player is due to bat. When the player returns, he/she would again be allowed to bat in that vacated spot.
2. The manager may remove the player from the entire game and delete that player completely from the batting order.

In either case, the opposing manager and the umpire must be notified.

If a player arrives late, he/she must be assigned the last position in the batting order and he/she must be able to play the minimum required innings defensively as set forth in the MINIMUM INNING RULE (subject to the exceptions explained in the MINIMUM INNING RULE) or he/she cannot enter the game.

7. FIELD DIMENSIONS

PINTO	Pitcher's Mound	40 feet
	Bases	60 feet
MUSTANG	Pitcher's Mound	44 feet
	Bases	60 feet
BRONCO	Pitcher's Mound	48 feet
	Bases	70 feet

PONY	Pitcher's Mound	54 feet
	Bases	80 feet

8. EQUIPMENT

All players must be in uniform, including hat and socks. All players must wear a batting helmet when on deck, at the plate or on the bases. **Metal spikes are not allowed.**

PINTO and MUSTANG – All batting helmets must have a face guard attached. No player shall be allowed to bat or run the bases without having a proper batting helmet with the face guard attached.

9. BASE STEALING

PINTO – NO STEALING. All runners must remain on their base until the ball is hit in play or are forced to advance by walk or interference.

MUSTANG – Runners may steal bases, but may not leave the base they occupy until the pitched ball touches the catcher's glove or passes the catcher.

If a base runner attempting to steal leaves the base before the pitched ball touches the catcher's glove or passes the catcher, the pitch shall be declared a "dead ball" (no pitch) and the runner shall be called "out".

If a base runner abandons his attempt to steal and begins to retreat to the base he came from, the pitcher (or any defensive player) may step on the pitching rubber with the ball in his/her possession, stopping play and requiring the runner to return to the base he came from.

If a runner stops half way between bases and attempts to draw a throw from the catcher or pitcher, and the ball is returned to the pitcher, the runner may advance provided the pitcher is not yet on the pitching rubber. Once the pitcher (or any defensive player) steps on the rubber with the ball in his/her possession, if the runner is not more that half way to the next base, the runner must return to base from which he came.

At anytime, if defensive action is taken against the runner and an attempt is made to throw or tag the runner out, play is open and the runners may advance.

BRONCO AND PONY – Runners may lead off and steal bases. When a defensive player is holding a runner on, he may not block the base to obstruct the runner from returning to the base. If an obstruction occurs, the runner will be awarded the next base and any other runners shall be advanced if forced by the advancement.

10. PITCHING

RESTRICTIONS

PINTO – Pitchers shall not pitch more than two (2) innings in any one calendar day or more than six (6) innings in any one calendar week.

MUSTANG – Pitchers shall not pitch more than two (2) innings in any one calendar day or more than six (6) innings in any one calendar week.

BRONCO – Pitchers shall not pitch more than five (5) innings in any one calendar day. A pitcher cannot pitch more than seven (7) innings in any 48 hour period (calculated from the starting time of the completed game). If three (3) or less innings are pitched in a game, the pitcher may pitch up to four (4) innings in a second game that day not to exceed the maximum of five (5) innings in any one calendar day. Pitchers shall not pitch more than ten (10) innings in any one calendar week. A calendar week is 12:01 AM Monday to 11:59 PM the following Sunday

PONY – Prior to May 1, 2009 Pony Pitchers shall not pitch more than five (5) innings per calendar day. From May 1, 2009 forward, Pitchers shall not pitch more than seven (7) innings in any one calendar day. A pitcher cannot pitch more than seven (7) innings in any 48 hour period (calculated from the starting time of the completed game). If three (3) or less innings are pitched in a game, the pitcher may pitch up to four (4) innings in a second game that day not to exceed the maximum of seven (7) innings in any one calendar day. Pitchers shall not pitch more than ten (10) innings in a calendar week. A calendar week is 12:01 AM Monday to 11:59 PM the following Sunday.

2009 PLAYOFF PITCHING RULES:

PINTO – Pitchers shall not pitch more than two (2) innings in any one calendar day or more than **Eight (8)** innings in the playoffs.

MUSTANG – Pitchers shall not pitch more than two (2) innings in any one calendar day or more than **Eight (8)** innings in the playoffs.

BRONCO – Pitchers shall not pitch more than five (5) innings in any one calendar day. A pitcher cannot pitch more than seven (7) innings in any 48 hour period (calculated from the starting time of the first game). If three (3) or fewer innings are pitched in a game, the pitcher may pitch up to four (4) innings in a second game that day not to exceed the maximum of five (5) innings in any one calendar day. A Bronco Pitcher shall not pitch more than **Ten (10)** innings in the playoffs.

PONY – Pitchers shall not pitch more than seven (7) innings in any one calendar day. A pitcher cannot pitch more than seven (7) innings in any 48 hour period (calculated from the starting time of the first game). If three (3) or fewer innings are pitched in a game, the pitcher may pitch up to four (4) innings in a second game that day not to exceed the maximum of seven (7) innings in any one calendar day. A Pony Pitcher shall not pitch more than **Twelve (12)** innings in the playoffs, except that any Pony Pitcher on a team receiving a **BYE** for the 1st round of the playoffs shall not pitch more than **Nine (9)** innings in the playoffs.

IN ALL DIVISIONS: Full-time travel players must play in at least 75% of their PBO in-house games in order to be eligible to pitch in the PBO playoffs.

STRIKE ZONE

PINTO – The bottom of the batter’s knees to the top of the batter’s shoulders at the point where the ball crosses the plate. The umpire shall assume a batter takes a normal batting stance for purposes of determining the height of the shoulders. A pitch ‘one width’ of a baseball inside the plate and outside the plate will be considered a strike to encourage batters to swing at more pitches and to allow for a more generous strike zone for our young pitchers.

MUSTANG, BRONCO AND PONY – The letters across the uniform shirt to the bottom of the kneecaps.

ALL DIVISIONS – If a pitcher hits three (3) batters in one (1) game, a pitching change must be made.

Once removed from pitching (for any reason), a player may not return to pitch in the same game.

The manager is allowed only one trip to the mound per pitcher per inning. Upon a second trip to the mound that inning, a pitching change must be made.

No more than six (6) players shall conference on the mound at one time.

One (1) pitch is considered an inning with respect to all pitching rules and limitations.

Players warming up pitchers between innings shall wear catcher’s helmets/masks.

A pitcher is allowed a minimum of five (5) warm-up pitches before the start of each inning. New pitchers who are brought in during the progression of the game are allowed ten (10) warm up pitches.

INTENTIONAL WALKS

No intentional walks are allowed. Violations constitute a balk in Bronco and Pony.

BALKS

The Balk Rule is in effect for Bronco and Pony divisions only. A warning will be given on each pitcher's first balk in each game for Bronco and Pony divisions.

DROPPED THIRD STRIKE

The Dropped Third Strike Rule is in effect for Bronco and Pony divisions only. A batter may attempt to advance to first base when the third strike called by the umpire is not caught by the catcher, providing 1) first base is unoccupied, or 2) first base is occupied with two (2) outs.

INFIELD FLY RULE

The Infield Fly Rule is in effect for Bronco and Pony divisions only. When runners are on 1st and 2nd or the bases are loaded with less than two outs and batted ball is popped up to the infield, an automatic out is called. The runners may advance at their own risk.

11. OTHER GAME RULES

STOPPING PLAY: PINTO AND MUSTANG ONLY

Anytime the ball is in play and the base runners are advancing, once **any defensive player** with the ball in his/her possession is (a) in the dirt area of the pitching mound (Pinto); or (b) standing on the pitching rubber (Mustang), the play is dead and all runners who are not at least half way to the next base must stop and return to the base they came from.

DEAD BALL RULE

If a batted ball hits a high tension wire in the field of play, the play is dead and all runners must return to their original positions and the umpire will call "no pitch". If a batted ball hits a high tension wire on the Bronco field, it is at the umpire's discretion to call it a dead ball or a home run (if the trajectory of the batted ball is such that the umpire believes the ball would have otherwise been a home run).

RUNNER INTERFERENCE

A base runner is out if he runs into or interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown or batted ball, or throw a batted ball.

FIELDER INTERFERENCE

A fielder may not block the base path of a runner attempting to advance a base or score unless he is attempting to catch/field a thrown or batted ball.

SLIDING RULE

The Slide Rule is in effect. When there is a play made at any base, a runner who fails to slide, or fails to go around a fielder who has the ball and is waiting to make a tag, is out.

A fielder must leave the runner a visible path to the base unless he already has the ball in his possession. If the fielder intentionally attempts to block the base without the ball in his possession, the runner is safe.

Blatant contact by a runner or fielder with any other player, at any base, will result in automatic ejection from the game.

FAN, COACH OR MANAGER INTERFERENCE

If a fan, coach or manager interferes with the progression of the game, they shall be given one warning. Upon the second infraction, they will be asked to leave the playing field.

FARM PLAYERS

In the event that a team falls below ten (10) players, that team may use a player on the farm team roster which is defined as any Non-Travel player in a lower age division or any Non-Travel player in that team's division not selected in the top five (5) rounds of that division's draft. Players not included in the draft process (i.e. late sign-ups assigned to a team) are not eligible to be used as a farm player. Use of a farm team player must not conflict with the farm team player's regularly scheduled games and the farm team player must not play more innings than a rostered player. The farm team player **must bat last** in the batting order and **must play the outfield only** when in the game defensively. The opposing manager must be notified before the game that farm team player is being used. The farm team player's manager must be asked and grant permission for the farm team player to be used. Such permission must be received prior to the game in which the farm team player will participate.

INJURED PLAYERS

No player will be allowed play in a game if that player is wearing any type of hard or soft cast or splint to protect a broken bone or injured part of the body. Nor will that player be allowed to remove the cast or splint to enable him/her to play unless that player has written approval to do so from a licensed physician. A splint on a player's finger is an exception and will not be grounds to prohibit that player from playing.

FULL-TIME TRAVEL PLAYERS

Full-time travel players must play in at least 75% of their PBO in-house games in order to be eligible to pitch in the PBO division playoffs.

HOME-RUNS

A hit ball will be signaled by the umpire as a Home-Run only if the ball is hit over the top of the outfield fence on a fly or if it hits the top of the outfield fence and lands on the opposite side of the fence out of the field of play.

On the Bronco field, Home-Runs must clear BOTH sections of the left field fence. A ball that hits the upper section of the fence will be in play.

PROTESTS

NO GAME MAY BE PROTESTED. ALL UMPIRE DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

SPECIAL PINTO SAFETY RULES OF PLAY

Safety is the primary goal at all times. The following rules are designed to minimize contact and avoid dangerous play. It is the manager's responsibility to understand and teach these rules to their players and coaches.

1. No player shall maliciously run into a fielder who has the ball or is attempting to field or catch a ball.
2. A runner who takes a direct path to the next base and merely comes close to a batted ball shall not be ruled out unless he changes his speed or path to the base to distract the fielder. However, the runner shall be called out if there is contact with a fielder who is in front of him. If a fielder runs into a runner from a point where the runner sees the fielder, then the fielder shall be guilty of interference. The purpose of this rule is to place the burden to avoid contact upon the player with the play "in front" of him.
3. A runner is out if he intentionally runs into or interferes with a fielder who is attempting to catch a thrown ball. Therefore, a runner advancing toward first base must avoid intentional contact with the first baseman. If, however, the first baseman moves in such a way as to contact the runner in an attempt to catch an errant throw, then the first baseman shall be guilty of interference. The first base bag in Pinto is elongated and one half is painted orange. It is the manager's responsibility to teach his players to touch only the orange part of the base when running to first base. If contact occurs on the white part of the base and the umpire deems that this is the reason for the contact, then the runner shall be called out.
4. A runner who fails to slide or fails to attempt to go around a fielder who has the ball and who is waiting to make a tag, is out. Combining rules 2 and 3 means that any runner approaching a base where the fielder has the ball or is about to receive the ball, must slide or be called out. However, if a fielder has the ball or is about to field a ball and is not near the base that

the runner is attempting to reach, then the runner shall not be forced to slide, but must attempt to go around the fielder. The umpire shall decide the distance from the base at which a player must slide.

5. A fielder may not block the path of a runner attempting to reach a base unless the fielder has possession of the ball or is attempting to field the ball. The umpire shall determine if the fielder is in the process of fielding the ball or should yield to the runner.