

Baseball and Softball Factory's Tournament Divisions
Operations Plan for Return to Game Play
Operating in a COVID-19 Environment | Safety is our No. 1 Priority

The purpose of this plan is to move forward with Baseball and Softball Factory (ie; Factory Athletics) game play with a safety-first approach during and post COVID-19 restrictions, based on Center for Disease Controls (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) best practices and guidelines.

Prior to the Start of the Event:

1. Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
2. A team and event e-mail must be sent to all teams, team managers, coaches, players/parents, and umpires in the week leading up to an event of play. The e-mail should 1) encourage all event attendees to practice social distancing; 2) explain that any person who is experiencing symptoms of sickness will be prohibited from attending the event/venue of play; and 3) make clear that all posted and published local-and state-regulated guidelines shall be followed.
3. Take proactive steps in creating social distancing environments, where possible.
 - a. Inspect designated seating and viewing areas for fans.
 - b. When using a tent, please restrict it to members of the same residence only.
 - c. Minimize the use of fields at facilities to remain within the current mass-gathering limitations of the local jurisdiction, if necessary.
 - d. Create one-way entry and exit gates where possible, to direct foot traffic.
4. Minimize player contact by eliminating team/player handshakes and team/player high fives. No group prayers/huddles between teams on the field. Create plan to keep social distancing between teams in effect beyond the field of play. Suggest other means of game celebrations and team sportsmanship at the end of games (e.g., ask players to tip their caps/visors, or have teams bow to each other from across the field).
5. Directors, players, scouts, umpires and spectators must adhere to the guidelines from CDC, state and local authorities regarding potential state travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders.
6. In dugouts, discontinue use of water coolers that are provided by tournaments, parks or teams. Players should bring their own, personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players should plan on bringing an individual water bottle. [For player safety, consider having some extra water bottles available in case a player forgets to bring own or does not have enough.]

Recommended Best Practices for Return to Game Play:

Arrival at Venue:

- All participants, spectators, and employees must adhere to six-foot physical distancing while at the facility
- All players, coaches, umpires, and spectators will undergo a contactless temperature check prior to being allowed in the venue. Any temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will result in that person not being allowed in the venue.
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home
- No team water coolers or shared drinking stations

Game Warm-Ups:

- Coaches must wear face coverings at all times
- Athletes must wear face coverings at all times while not actively participating in the field of play
- All participants must adhere to six-foot physical distancing during warm-ups

Athletes:

- Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices off the field of play
- All players will undergo a contactless temperature check prior to being allowed in the venue. Any temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will result in that person not being allowed in the venue.
- Athletes must wear face coverings at all times while not actively participating in the field of play
- Must not share water or equipment. Belongings should be used only should be used only by the individual owner or operator including, but not limit to water bottles, gloves, bats, hats, and other on/off-field gear
- No touch rule – players should refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and fans.

Umpires:

- Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play
- All umpires will undergo a contactless temperature check prior to being allowed in the venue. Any temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will result in that person not being allowed in the venue.
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home
- Must wear face coverings at all times
- Must avoid exchanging documents or equipment with players, coaches, or spectators

Spectators:

- Must adhere to six-foot social distancing practices. This includes in and around bleachers for anyone not in the same family
- All spectators will undergo a contactless temperature check prior to being allowed in the venue. Any temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will result in that person not being allowed in the venue.
- Must conduct daily symptom assessments by coaches and players (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home
- Must not enter player areas (on the field of play or bench areas).
- Must keep six-feet or more distance from the backstop

Leaving the Venue:

- Individuals should not congregate in common areas or parking lot following the event or practice
- Umpires should adhere to six-foot social distancing practices when interacting with players, coaches, and spectators off the field of play
- Individuals should not exchange items

Return to Game Play Details:

1. The managers meeting at home plate should be limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires. Keep 6 feet apart. No players at plate meeting. Eliminate the meeting if possible.
2. Where possible, consider options for limiting both the pitching and the scorecard exchanges, in order to reduce person-to-person contact.
3. Allow teams to spread players out; expand the dugout area when room permits and only if player safety will not be compromised. Expansion of the team dugouts should not be done into foul ball areas. Attempt to limit bench personnel to essential team personnel.
4. All athletic testing will be completed with one player at a time, as staff remains socially distant (at least 6 feet apart from the players participating). All players waiting to perform will remain in their designated section on the sidelines. Any athletic testing that requires handling of items (ie: grip strength, cones, radar guns, etc) will be sanitized after each individual use.
5. Encourage parents to supply their players with disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings/quarters/periods.
6. Required hand sanitizing: Hand sanitizer stations will be available for players at the field. Extra disinfecting wipes will also be made available for equipment.
7. Home plate umpire will be required to call balls and strikes from the behind the mound, or 6 feet behind the catcher. Whichever is agreed upon.

8. Allow players to wear PPE items if they choose, as long as the items do not compromise the safety of any and all participants in the game.
9. Require teams to clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each game, and to wipe down (clean) hard surfaces such as benches, bat racks, etc.
10. No intermingling (cross-pollination) of players allowed as one group leaves the field and another enters.
11. Upon arriving at a dugout for the first time, teams are to disinfect hard surface areas (benches, bat racks, etc.). Procedures #7 and #8 here will comply with the CDC recommendation of a two-step process for cleaning and disinfecting.
12. Each tournament will have the discretion to adjust the playing formats and increasing the amount of time between games, to minimize overlap and traffic flow where needed.
13. No communal water jugs; no sunflower seeds; bring your own drinks, use your own equipment (bat, glove, helmet).
14. Batting gloves required; any bats that happen to come in contact with more than one player should be cleaned with sanitizing wipes after every use.
15. Each player will bring and use their own batting helmet.
16. Catchers will bring their own catchers gear. No swapping of gear.
17. Game balls will be cleaned with sanitizing wipes before ball put back in play.

It's incumbent upon each of us to practice good hygiene before, at, and after events. If you or anyone in your household, or anyone who brings you to this event, has recently tested positive for COVID-19 or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19, you will not be permitted to participate in this event. It is also important that if you do not feel good or experience any signs of COVID-19 that you stay home and seek medical assistance. Anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, etc.) or exposed to someone who is symptomatic should not come to an event. Day of participation waivers with certification of health and exposure will be required. Remember that Safety is our No. 1 Priority.