

Cornbelt Leagues & Tri-County Pony League Covid Return to Playing Rules 2021

These best practices are designed to help coaches with ideas and plans for operating events with COVID-19 protocols. They do not replace or supersede any protocols or restrictions outlined by state or local authorities. All coaches must continue to follow those local or state guidelines. All participants must sign a release waiver along with a parent or guardian prior to participating. We strongly urge any coach out in the field share with us details of any and all challenges that may arise and which might not be addressed in this document. Once an issue is identified, we will work with the leagues on how to handle the issue and then share that information with all towns.

Recommended Before Game Procedures

- 1) Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
- 2) 1 day prior to any games, a coach should text the opposing coach and parents to 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. 4. 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 family members 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. 5. Minimize player contact by eliminating team/player handshakes and team/player high fives. 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). 6. Coaches, players, umpires and spectators must adhere to the guidelines from CDC, state and local authorities. 7. In dugouts, discontinue use of water coolers. Players should bring their own, personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players should plan on bringing an individual water bottle.
- 3) We ask you to self-screen and do not enter the park if you are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing or other symptoms identified by the CDC or have been in contact with someone with Covid-19 in the last 14 days. Thermal Forehead Thermometers should be made available during games. Responsibility of each town. If a Coach or Player has a temperature of 100.3 or above, they should not attend games.
- 4) Players and spectators are encouraged not to carpool unless in same family and to wait in their cars until 15 minutes prior to game time.

Recommended Best Practices for the Field-of-Play

- 1) Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
- 2) Masks are **REQUIRED** to be worn by all individuals including coaches, spectators, players, umpires, and tournament staff when Entering the Park, while in the Park, and Exiting the Park. **Players Only may remove their masks once on the designated field surface.** Spectators may remove their masks once they are in a spectating area and maintaining social distance. No person shall enter any park without a mask. Anyone not following this policy will be removed from the park. If a guardian is removed from the park, the player will be removed as well due to safe play law regarding supervision. We hope all individuals are understanding of this policy to continue with youth baseball. League will allow players to wear PPE as long as they don't interfere with the safety of the game. Plastic face shields are not allowed since they are not NOCSAE approved. Masks and other face coverings are perfectly ok.
- 3) The managers meeting at home plate should be limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires. No players at plate meeting. Eliminate the meeting if possible.

- 4) Where possible, consider options for limiting both the pitching and the scorecard exchanges, in order to reduce person-to-person contact.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Encourage parents to supply their players with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings/quarters/periods.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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.
- 9) Ban the use of sunflower seeds.
- 10) It is recommended that all players and umpires use their own equipment while participating. This includes gloves, bats, etc.
- 11) The catcher and umpire shall position themselves during a player's at-bat to allow for social distancing
- 12) All staff, players, umpires and spectators are encouraged to continue social distancing on and off the field during an event.
- 13) Increase dugouts sizes where possible, to eliminate that space restriction. Recommend players stand outside the dugout to allow for social distancing, but do not allow them onto the field of play.
- 14) No spectators will be allowed from 6 feet from the end of the dugout all the way behind home plate to the visitor's side of the end of their dugout. All fans must socially distance. We understand that families may sit together. We have no way to know who is truly in a family at the ballpark. With that said, no more than 2 adults will be allowed to be within 6 feet of each other. Please bring chairs in case needed to accomplish this. Expect to sit spread out down outfield foul lines if needed and please don't congregate in one area. If we have an issue with Social Distancing of any type. The manager will be asked to rectify the situation immediately. If the situation is not fixed, the game may be declared a forfeit and the team who was not social distancing could be removed from the event. Please set a good example to allow play.
- 15) If using a tent especially in public parks, only family members are allowed under the tent. Social distancing still applies for more than 2 adults under the tent closer than 6ft.
- 16) We recommend teams to limit coaches to two and not sit in the dug outs with players unless wearing a mask. Coaches are authorized to sit on buckets outside the dugout on the field. Social distance from each other and players at all times including during warm ups. No unauthorized personal shall be in the dugouts including scorekeepers.
- 17) Coaches should maintain attendance log of participants for contact tracing purposes. Sports organizers should maintain attendance logs of all facility and possible spectators for contact tracing purposes
- 18) If an athlete, coach, or spectator is identified as being COVID-19 positive by testing, cleaning and disinfecting should be performed according to CDC guidelines
- 19) Where appropriate, notify individuals who have been exposed. Individuals who tested positive should not be identified by name.
- 20) Any individual who has had close contact (15 min or more) with any other person who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should quarantine for 14 days after the last/ most recent contact with the infected individual and should seek a COVID-19 test at a state or local government testing center, healthcare center or other testing locations. All other individuals should be on alert for symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath and taking temperature if symptoms develop
- 21) If you are not comfortable returning to play with assumed Covid-19 risk then please inform team managers that you won't be participating. This is an individual choice for everyone and no one is forced to participate.