



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

April 23, 2021



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

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OASA Return to Play Guidelines

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is:

- to outline plans, guidelines and procedures for a safe Return to Play*
- to address **FIVE (5)** major areas of concern with respect to physical distancing*
- to provide a certain level of comfort to participants by outlining steps to be taken to help maximize their safety and well-being*
- to outline OASA tournament or play down specific rule variations and criteria that must be followed*
- to allow for any enhanced OASA / Event protocols that we might develop or that the province or municipalities may require us to do to rent the space*

The items listed in this document are suggestions of recommended safeguards for restarting softball activity in Ontario. Provincial / Territorial Associations, Leagues, Tournament Hosts, Staff, Players, Coaches, Parents, and Spectators must continue to follow Federal, Provincial and Local Governmental guidelines. Leagues or Associations are free to make their guidelines more or less stringent, as long as they are approved by local authorities. Remember that information and recommendations during the pandemic are very fluid and are subject to change.

These protocols will be the responsibility of the Association, Home Team, Coach, and Tournament Hosts. If required, they may need to be approved by the City / Municipality in which the tournament or event is being held.

The Provincial government is regularly updating guidelines that can be found through the following link (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-response-framework-keeping-ontario-safe-and-open>). Within that document there is specific guidance related to each of the colour coded zone levels that are assigned to the 34 Public Health Units across the province that sets out details for Sports and Recreational Facilities, including maximum counts for leagues, indoor and outdoor groups of athletes and spectators. Beyond the colours the province has implemented Shut Down or Emergency Brake and Stay at Home orders that place incremental restrictions beyond the Grey – Lockdown level. The colour codes are:

Green - Prevent

Yellow - Protect

Orange - Restrict

Red - Control

Grey - Lockdown

Shut Down / Emergency Brake – tighter than Grey restrictions

Stay at Home – tightest restrictions

The OASA will continue to assess how this guidance affects our ability to hold provincial tournaments or play downs and we will be in contact with all affiliated teams directly to discuss this.

On May 28, 2020 the WBSC issued guidance for softball and baseball that included commentary on their website (<https://www.wbsc.org/news/wbsc-guidelines-for-a-safe-return-to-baseball-softball-baseball5>). WBSC's full list of "Safe Return to Baseball/Softball -- COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines" can be **viewed here**.

WHO's "Considerations for sports federations/sports event organizers when planning mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19" is available on the **WHO website**.



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2. ENTRY

All persons entering the park must agree to be screened by a representative from the Host for tournaments or the Home team for play downs, if not, no admission (this screening may require a certified individual with private assurance protection if required by local authorities).

A COVID-19 Declaration must be provided by each team to the OASA Registrar within 3 – 5 days of each OASA tournament, play downs or event. (insert link to declaration on OASA website)

Signage must be well displayed in the entry area with regards to the spreading of the virus, proper hygiene, information on physical distancing and what to do if you have any symptoms.

Depending on the colour code zone that the event is taking place in the level of screening and contact tracing varies. The more restrictive the colour code the more intensive the screening must be. Similarly, the level of contact tracing data gathered increases as the colour codes get more restrictive.

Wellness testing inclusive of the Declaration each time the athletes, coach, parent etc. attends a game, practice, tournament. If a person is denied entry, then a procedure / handout should be in place to encourage that person to visit a testing facility immediately and ensure that you collect that individuals complete contact information. (Host or Home team responsibility)

During this process individuals must also be asked if they are experiencing any symptoms (new or existing cough, fever, sore throat, respiratory illness, difficulty breathing, and have they been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19 and have they travelled outside the country in the past 14 days) to make a determination to help ensure the safety of all individuals involved.

- Questions that frontline workers ask before entering/taking care of patients to id potential COVID-19
- Ideally have an app or link available or a checklist for teams / coaches for participants to do a self assessment before they leave their residence / hotel.
- Have coaches re-assess all players at the field before each game.
- Limit entrances to 1 or 2. Extra staff may be required to ensure security.
- Any player, parent, coach, umpire, etc. showing symptoms should not show up at the park but if they fail the screening then they would not be permitted for the tournament or game and the team / coach would be responsible to ensure the person showing symptoms is isolated from all others and also isolate those who were in contact before discovery.

There is also an expectation that any individual experiencing symptoms should take the initiative and stay home.

Entry ways to field/diamond area(s): (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Considerations in this area will be dependent on the type/location of the complex or playing fields.
- Emphasis should be placed on providing safe travel areas to reduce contact between individuals entering and exiting the park / complex.
- Must monitor for mass gathering numbers in park for all teams, leagues. For tournament play this would be the responsibility of the Tournament Director(s) or the Host Association.
- Should not use indoor facilities and should plan for safe use of pathways / trails. Controlling crowds by having the pathway split into 2 specific directions, as in grocery stores.
- The use of caution tape may be recommended to safely mark off areas that should not be accessed, as well as helping to provide marked areas for travel to and from diamonds, etc.
- Volunteers will all need PPE and may need multiple tables in order to meet the distancing rules, all work areas to be taped off.
- PPE defined as mask / face coverings and potentially gloves.



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Team and Player-Sign In (each Coach / Team Manager's responsibility)

- A coach / team manager will be required to provide all team roster information to the OASA registrar prior to the tournament / play downs to avoid the requirement to have players sign in individually.

Players, Coaches and Spectators Contact Information (Coach / Team Manager's responsibility)

- The contact information (name, email or phone number) for all players, coaches and spectators in attendance for each game or practice must be recorded and retained for 14 days after the activity in case it is required for contact tracing in relation to an actual or potential case of COVID-19 being detected.

Entry to concessions, washrooms, food areas (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Entry ways should be properly marked to ensure the 6-foot physical distancing rule can be followed, or temporary closure of concession/washroom facilities may be required.
- Washrooms, maintain no lineups, clean frequently (i.e., every 2 hours), must have hand sanitizer in each, possibly have more porta potties, to prevent line ups.

Hand Sanitization (Host or Home team responsibility)

- The establishment of hand sanitization stations may be applicable for some complexes / facilities, but at a minimum they must be on the bench and equipment area of every team for all training, practices, games and tournament play.
- Hosts would be responsible for hand sanitizer in each washroom, at concessions stands, at souvenir stands and at each entrance / exit at least. Ideally hosts would also provide sanitizer on each bench as well.
- Teams are required to bring their own personal supply of hand sanitizer to be able to participate.
- Frequent hand sanitization will be stressed for players in all league / tournament play and is mandatory.

3. OFF-FIELD

Concession areas / Washroom facilities (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Concessions: may only be allowed to open if they can provide pre-packaged options, as well as the ability to provide consistent sanitization and abide by social distancing guidelines.
- Concessions – would be difficult but workers with appropriate PPE, and line ups must adhere to the 6-foot physical distancing intervals as in grocery stores. All payments by must be made by debit/credit – no cash transactions.
- Food areas: Dining room / seating areas are recommended to remain closed to prevent gathering of individuals. If open, eating surfaces will require consistent sanitization.
- Washrooms: Will require consistent attention and sanitization. Leagues may opt to keep washroom facilities closed during play to reduce possible contamination. Must be cleaned / fully sanitized at least once per every 2 hours by the host.
- Team snacks, picnics, shared lunches, BBQ's are not allowed.
- All garbage cans must have closed lids for the disposal of sanitizing materials, tissues, and other refuse.

Medical Personnel (Host or Home team responsibility)

- If medical personnel are present, they will need to have had their own training, and may be able to provide suggestions on further safety considerations and must have their own PPE.
- A separate area / tent for treating athletes or anyone who is injured must be available that ensures the 6 foot physical distancing requirement is maintained.
- Medical team will need to be fully equipped with PPE to be able to be in close contact with the athletes, this includes team trainers etc.

Playground areas (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Guidelines for these areas should be consistent with local guidelines / regulations. Suggestion for tournaments is to leave them closed, but if they are open as part of the city property, then the numbers in the playground will be included in the mass gathering numbers for your facility.



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Vendors (Host or Home team responsibility)

- All vendors will be asked to follow outlined guidelines and regulations set out by the event organizer(s) and the Province of Ontario.
- Souvenirs – all payments by debit/credit card/e-transfer, no cash accepted, clothing cannot be tried on prior to purchase, limit the amount of people in the sales area to adhere to the 6 foot physical distancing requirements, lineup grocery store style.

Hotels (each team will be responsible for their own accommodations)

- Hotels will have their own procedures and guidelines in place to ensure the safety of their guests. Hotels may not allow previously accepted practices (such as sharing of rooms for X# of individuals).
- Hotel rooms, each room should be for a family unit only, no player only / team rooms. Will they be open, and if so, what are regulations that they will put in place? Alterations to the length or structure of events may be required if hotel accommodations remain unavailable.

Vehicles (Host or Home team responsibility)

- For shared vehicles (i.e., golf carts), frequent sanitization will be required. Provision of disinfectant wipes for each vehicle would be required by the host.
- Carpooling should be avoided. Only family members should travel together to and from games / tournaments.

Headquarters / Registration (Host or Home team and OASA responsibility)

- These locations must remain restricted to use by Host / OASA Tournament personnel only and roped off or restricted. Guidelines must be posted to keep players / coaches away from these locations as much as possible. Score reporting / complaints must be done electronically.
- Teams are to provide all necessary information required to participate electronically at least one week prior to the tournament or start of the play downs, or on an earlier date if requested by OASA. For OASA events this includes the following:
 - Team roster including players and coaches and caring person (plus a name and # for immediate contact if necessary)
 - Valid identification showing the players date of birth.
 - COVID-19 Declaration by everyone on the roster (includes a parent / guardian for minors)
 - Waiver of Liability from everyone on the roster (includes a parent / guardian for minors)
 - Rowan's Law Concussion Code of Conduct from all coaches, assistant coaches, managers
- Approximately 7 to 10 days prior to the tournament the OASA will coordinate a conference call or video meeting with all teams scheduled to participate in the upcoming tournament to review expectations and responsibilities of everyone. This meeting will also include an umpire representative to address any rule questions.
- The draw board will be viewed only at a distance of 12 feet and only updated by 1 or 2 designated OASA or Host staff to restrict the number of people in contact with it.
- For Play Down games teams will coordinate all logistics with the OASA Convenor assigned to their series at least 1 week prior to the start of the series.
- Registration tables must be disinfected after each use and personnel change.

Scorekeeping (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Scorekeeping, announcing, spotters all need 6-foot distancing and may need separate tables that must be disinfected after each use and personnel change.

Banquets / Ceremonies (Host or Home team and OASA responsibility)

- Banquets, fireworks and opening ceremonies are not allowed.
- Closing ceremonies are allowed as long as 6 foot physical distancing is maintained.
- Championship plaques, medals, banners, MVP awards are to be announced only.
- All awards will be kept in their original packaging and given to the coach to distribute to each athlete appropriately.



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4. ON-FIELD

COVID-19 signage should be explicitly presented in the park on fencing (Host or Home team to verify with the city when they will install these).

There will possibly be a limit on the number of diamonds in use, depending on the size of the complex / park, the proximity to each other and the mass gathering numbers. Hosts and OASA tournament convenors will need to check with local officials prior to the event to ensure that maximum numbers of people allowed to gather are understood and maintained throughout the tournament.

Hand Sanitization (team responsibility)

- Should be done consistently throughout the game.
- Teams are responsible for individual and team hand sanitizer for each player, coach and caring parent.

Coin Toss / Rules and Exchange of Line-up Cards (OASA and team responsibility)

- Ground rules procedure, one representative from each team should be allowed at home plate for the plate conference with the 6-foot physical distancing always maintained by all parties.
- Coin flip – done either virtually or with social distancing.
- Line ups are to be filled out and electronically shared with the other team, the umpire and the scorekeeper. If line up cards are used, they must be disinfected and placed on the backstop for all to view (i.e., clothespin or clear holder) and not be exchanged.

Bats (team responsibility)

- The most desirable scenario is that there will be no sharing of bats. If bats are to be shared between players, they must be sanitized by a coach / bench adult before each player uses it.
- Each player must have their own helmet and or facemask which should be cleaned after each use.
- Only the offensive team will remove a bat from the field, i.e., the batter if unsuccessful in reaching base in the at bat or a designated team person with appropriate PPE if they do reach base.
- No bat boys / girls allowed.
- Picking up the hitter's bat will be the responsibility of the bench coach and must be cleaned after each use.
- In the event there is a bat near home plate that poses a danger for the players during game play the umpire will kick it out of the way.

Player's Equipment (team responsibility)

- No gloves on fence, no bringing out gloves, batting gloves, distancing of player's bags of 6 feet.
- Players are to be reminded to not share equipment and keep each individual's equipment isolated – 6 foot distance and reduce coming into contact with the equipment of other players.
- Personal batting gloves are permitted. They are not to be shared with any other players. Hand washing / sanitizing is preferred as it is deemed to be more efficient.
- Each catcher must have their own personal equipment that should be disinfected after each game.
- Sharing of water bottles is not allowed.
- Label all water bottles and personal equipment so there is no confusion.
- Make it a priority to provide your team with essentials to stay healthy – hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, disinfecting spray, etc. Also, make it mandatory for players to disinfect everything that was used during participation.
- AT ALL TIMES disinfect and sterilize your own personal equipment

Protective Face Masks / Helmets (team responsibility)

- There should be no sharing of protective face masks or helmets at any time.
- Face shields are also allowed and may be preferred as it provides protection for the players' eyes.

Masks (non-protective) (team responsibility) (see section 11 – How to wear a mask)

- Face masks/coverings for the purpose of reducing potential virus transmission will be a required stipulation for entering the park / complex / facility.
- It is strongly recommended that all personnel on the diamond wear a face mask / covering. Exceptions to this would be individuals who provide a medical note or if the local public health unit provides specific direction that they do not recommend the use of face masks / coverings.



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- Where 6 foot physical distancing is not able to be maintained face masks / coverings must be worn.
- If the catcher and umpire are observing the 6 foot physical distancing requirement then they are not required to wear a face mask or covering.
- The batter, on deck batter and any offensive player who reaches base safely must wear a face mask or covering (a bandana or buff will suffice).
- All coaches on the field of play are required to wear face masks.
- In lieu of masks, team coloured balaclavas / bandanas for players, coaches and umpires will be permitted.

Balls (defensive team responsibility)

- The defensive team will manage (OASA to supply 1 new ball per team per game) their own balls while in the field to reduce contact with individuals on the opposing team. No one on the offensive team is to retrieve or touch the ball. Additional official game balls are to be supplied by each team for each game.
- The defensive team will retrieve all balls including homeruns and foul balls unless a designated ball chaser for each team is used.
- Balls will require consistent sanitization by each team every half inning during games and the coach must determine how often during practices.
- Each team will have a bucket, soap and water, cloth and towel, or spray sanitizer and be responsible for cleaning their balls between innings. A designated individual should be identified by each team. For practices the coach will be required to determine how frequently to 'sanitize' the balls.
- Umpires will not handle the balls at all.
- Clean water / water source must be provided by the Association, Home Team, Tournament host or city / municipality in which the event is being held.

Catcher and Batter (team responsibility)

- It is not expected that the catcher and batter will be able to maintain the 6 foot physical distancing desired. If not, then both must wear a face mask or covering while on the field of play.
- If the catcher and batter are able to maintain the 6 foot physical distancing desired, they will not be required to wear a face mask or covering.

Catcher and Umpire (defensive team and umpires' responsibility)

- It is not expected that the catcher and umpire will be able to maintain the 6 foot physical distancing desired. If not, then both must wear a face mask or covering while on the field of play.
- If the catcher and umpire are able to maintain the 6 foot physical distancing desired, they will not be required to wear a face mask or covering. This may involve the umpire being positioned behind the backstop in cases where the distance between home plate and the backstop is very short. Alternatively, the umpire could potentially be positioned behind the pitcher for younger age groups.

Batter / Bench area (team responsibility)

- On the bench – 1 bench adult / assistant coach / manager only – batter, then on deck batter, then batter in the hole outside dugout, then the batting order would have to be spread out at 6-foot intervals behind the dugout (will vary depending on park). Bench adult / assistant coach / manager to disinfect the dugout after each inning.
- Sanitizer on benches to allow for frequent hand washing (between innings / after at bats).
- If the dugouts / benches are not large enough to allow for 6 foot physical distancing between all players and coaches, then they are to be cordoned or blocked off. Then have the "bench" along the baseline / outfield fence / behind the dugout, perhaps mark off "boxes" painted on the grass in 6' squares to ensure proper social distancing. Having each player bring their own lawn / folding chair.
- There is to be no contact with coaches at 1st, 3rd, after hits or home runs or reaching base, etc.
- Batters/runners should attempt to reduce any unnecessary contact with other players. They should also avoid using their hands to contact the ball at any time.



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On-Deck Batter (offensive team responsibility)

- Consideration should be made as to whether having an on-deck batter reduces the ability of the batter / umpire / catcher to remain at least 6-feet apart. If so, the on-deck batter may need to be positioned outside of the field of play.

General Protocols (teams' responsibility)

- No handshakes, team huddles, high fives, etc. allowed. Suggest a new show of respect for the opposition at a safe distance.
- Protests are to be held at a safe distance. Any player / coach / umpire getting heated and yelling will be removed from the venue.
- Defensive conferences at the pitcher's circle to be limited to one person who must remain outside the circle.
- Mound visits with catcher / coach both must remain outside the circle and the catcher must raise their glove up in front of their face if they are not wearing a face mask or covering.

No sunflower seeds, gum chewing or spitting (teams' responsibility)

- General spitting will be discouraged for all participants, both on and off the field. It is recognized that this will be difficult to enforce.
- Sunflower seeds / chewing tobacco or gum will be handled with a zero tolerance policy that will become enforceable through ejection from the game and / or removal from events.

Final Game Sheet / Lineup cards (teams' responsibility)

- If lineup cards are required to be submitted following the completion of the game, these cards should be submitted electronically by sending a picture of the card to the appropriate party or dropped into a designated container.

Pre-Game / Post-Game Huddles / Handshakes (teams' responsibility)

- These should not be conducted at any time.
- They will not be allowed or required before or following games at any level.
- Give yourself space from your fellow teammates and coaches (No tight team huddles / touching).
- Allow larger circled team huddles and beginning of game cheers, allow distance when giving advice one on one, prioritize being engaged during conversations while giving yourself space.
- Do not share skin on skin contact (No high fives, handshakes, elbows, etc.).
- Air fives, cheers for certain situations and accomplishments, hand gestures and a group cheer thanking your opponent for participating.
- Create a method to show support without having to high five – i.e., a practiced in sync clap / collectively as a team (touch the dirt / do a cheer / synchronically a hand gesture)

Sunscreen (teams' responsibility)

- Sharing of sunscreen is not permitted. Personal sunscreen use is permitted.

Players on the bench / dugout (team responsibility)

- Will need to be consistent with government guidelines relating to the maximum number of individuals allowed to gather in a given area. Recommend 1 coach / adult at each end with a bench adult / manager / coach = total of 3 max.
- Players may be required to sit behind the bench / dugout to help maintain safe distances between them.
- Make it a priority to provide your team with the essentials to stay healthy – hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, disinfecting spray, etc. Also, make it mandatory for players to disinfect everything that was used during participation.
- Keep a hand sanitizing station in your team dugout. This will allow players and coaches to have the option to feel like they have the resources they need quickly and safely without having to leave the diamond. Please stress to your players that this is a MUST (exception: their own safety helmet and mask).
- Do not eat in the dugout (seeds, spitz, snacks, etc.).



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Exit from the playing field during a game (team responsibility)

- During the game, players entering and exiting the playing field should do so in an orderly fashion that allows a 6-foot physical distance to be maintained between players as much as possible.
- Any player not required to be on the field should not enter the playing surface (e.g., homerun celebrations).

First and Third Base Coaches distance, hand taps (team responsibility)

- Coaches on the playing field must remain a minimum of 6-feet away from the base they are coaching to prevent contact with the defensive player. Also, coaches are not allowed to engage an offensive player with high-fives or any other physical contact.
- Field dependent: Coaches may be asked to coach from outside of the playing field if a safe distance is unable to be maintained.

Injured Player (team responsibility)

- If medical personnel are on hand, injured players should be dealt with primarily by these individuals, unless further assistance is requested.
- The number of individuals attending to an injured player should be limited to the number necessary based on the severity of the injury. Sufficient first-aid kits should be provided that include latex gloves and facemasks to help increase the safety of their interaction with the injured player.
- Players injured during the game must be positioned in a safe area or at the other end of the dugout. For younger ages the parent will need to remove the child from the field and place them in a safe place respecting all social distancing rules. (Recommend the bleachers since they will be off limits to any spectators)

Pitching Conferences / On-Field Conferences (team responsibility)

- Will need to be reduced to coach / pitcher conferences only, if not entirely removed.

Score sheets (team responsibility)

- Scores are to be reported electronically to reduce congestion at headquarter locations. If not score sheets are to be dropped in designated container.

Call Challenges / Protests (team responsibility)

- Challenges / Protests may be made as long as the challenge is made by a recognized coach in a controlled and orderly fashion, and the coach / umpire are able to remain at a safe distance in which neither is put at risk.

Bat Testing / Checks (Umpire's responsibility)

- Bat testing prior to the start of games / tournaments will be done using a visual check done by the umpire crew to ensure all bats have the appropriate thumbprint, certification stamp and do not show any visible signs of damage.
- Bat testing / stickering done by leagues / tournament organizers will be postponed for the season to prevent unnecessary contact with equipment.

Post Game Bench / Dugout Cleaning (Host or Home team responsibility)

- Emphasis will be placed on mandatory cleaning and sanitization of the bench area following the completion of the game. Access to extra garbage bags / recycling containers may be a request made to specific parks / municipalities. Cleaning of the bench / dugout will be the responsibility of the host or home team if it is just a practice or an exhibition or non-tournament game.



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OASA Plans for 2021

- To hold a full slate of OASA tournaments for all age groups, if possible, following all current provincial and public health guidance and restrictions.
- Hold tournaments or play downs, depending on host availability and the number of teams that affiliate in each age group while always adhering to the maximum gathering limits for participants and spectators.

OASA Rule Modifications for 2021

Tournament Play

- No new inning after 90 minutes.
- Maximum runs per inning; U10, U12, U14 and U16 – 6 runs; U19+ - 7 runs
- Face masks / coverings / shields are strongly recommended for everyone on the field (batter, on deck batter, coaches, catcher, plate umpire required – remaining defensive players and base umpire recommended), unless 6 foot physical distancing is possible, a medical exception is provided, or the local public health unit recommends that masks not be worn.
- Tournament scheduling needs to have at least 30 to 45 minutes between game end / game start times to minimize / maintain maximum participant numbers in the space. This allows one set of teams / participants to leave the premises, before the next set of teams needs to come in and warm-up appropriately.
- Depending on the number of teams / associations able to host a tournament and the number of teams that affiliate in an age group we will consider creating 4 or 8 team A, B, C groups based on seeding from team results in 2019 and / or 2020 primarily (plus other information if available) to hold qualifiers or eliminations or provincial championship tournaments.
- If the season is short, or tournaments or regional play downs are not able to be run OASA will consider running regional Skills Clinics or a series of festivals regionally to allow athletes and coaches to participate in at least some softball activities in 2021.

Play Downs

- Face masks / coverings / shields are strongly recommended for everyone on the field (batter, on deck batter, coaches, catcher, plate umpire required – remaining defensive players and base umpire recommended), unless 6 foot physical distancing is possible, a medical exception is provided, or the local public health unit recommends that masks not be worn.
- If we are limited by teams that affiliate in any age group or a lack of hosts able to run tournaments, we will consider running regional play downs to crown regional / provincial champions, using a double knockout, round robin or two out of three format (tbd). Depending on the number of teams involved and the timing of the play downs we will look at potentially having smaller (minimum of 4 teams) tournaments to determine provincial champions.

Potential Rule Modifications for Non OASA Leagues (could be varied by age group) **(local league responsibility)**

- Consider using a second orange safety bag (or throw down base possibly) at first base that the batter would use to avoid potential collisions or coming into close (less than 6 foot physical distancing) proximity to the first baseman.
- Consider having no stealing of any bases if the catcher is positioned 6 feet behind the batter which would make it much more difficult to potentially throw out the base runner.
- Consider eliminating all tag plays, making every play at a base and home plate a force play. This would require commitment lines to be drawn on the baselines. After passing the commitment line the base runner must proceed to the next furthest base.



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- Consider starting with a 1-1 count on each batter to speed up games, especially where time limits are set for each game (i.e., tournaments with no new inning after 90 minutes)
- Consider reducing the maximum number of innings to be played by age group (i.e., U8 3 innings; U10 + U12 4 innings; U14 + U16 5 innings; U19+ 6 innings).
- Consider capping the numbers of runs per inning by age group (especially for the younger age groups) (i.e., U10 + U12 5 runs; U14 + U16 6 runs; U19+ 7 runs)
- Consider alternative versions of softball that require fewer pieces of equipment or smaller spaces in order to play a 'game' (i.e., <https://baseball5.wbsc.org/>) especially for younger age groups.
- Consider increased restrictions on the number of offensive / defensive conferences allowed per game to reduce the length of time needed to play each game.

5. SPECTATORS: If Applicable

***PLEASE NOTE: The allowance of spectators will be dependent on the guidelines set out by the Ontario government and local health officials. For all age groups we will only permit competition / practice if we can adhere to local mass gathering allowances.**

Screening (team responsibility)

- All spectators should self assess prior leaving home / hotel to attend any games. If they have any symptoms, they should stay home.
- All spectators entering the park must answer the COVID-19 screening questions. If any of the questions are failed entry into the park will be denied.

Seating (team responsibility)

- Spectators will not be allowed to watch the game from inside the infield baselines. It will be required that any spectators (if allowed) will need to bring their own chairs or blankets and sit down the foul line or outside of the outfield fence. Seating areas including bleachers and picnic areas will be considered off limits to prevent congregation of groups of spectators. Players who are not required to be present for a game should be considered spectators and will be required to follow spectator guidelines. (i.e., injured players attending to support their team).
- All spectators must adhere to the 6 foot physical distancing requirement for anyone outside of their immediate family that they are residing with.

Hand Sanitization (team responsibility)

- Established hand sanitization guidelines must be followed by all spectators. A personal / household supply of hand sanitizer is required.

No sunflower seeds, gum chewing or spitting (team responsibility)

- As is consistent with guidelines for participants, spectators will not be allowed any seeds, gum, or chewing tobacco and will be asked to remove it from the area.

Restaurant / Bar / Concession / Playground Area (Host responsibility)

- Spectator use of these areas will be dependent on the operational guidelines of these areas / facilities as outlined by facility management / municipal governments.

Pets / Minor Children (team responsibility)

- Spectators / participants will be asked to leave small children / pets at home if at all possible, to reduce the number of individuals present at a game or event. If they are present, they must be supervised at all times by a parent / guardian.

Crowds (team primary responsibility – Host and OASA secondary responsibility)

- Crowding will not be tolerated. Individuals will be asked to respect the 6-foot physical distancing rules at all times. When physical distancing is not being observed and gatherings of individuals become too large, they will be asked to separate.



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6. UMPIRES

Catcher and Home Plate Umpire (Umpires)

- The catcher and plate umpire will be required to wear a face mask / covering at all times while on the diamond, due to them being within the 6 foot physical distancing guidance. For all OASA tournaments and play downs this will be the expectation.
- If the catcher and umpire are able to adhere to the 6 foot physical distancing guidance, then face masks or coverings will not be required to be worn.
- Umpire's equipment / clothing changes may require multiple tents or a limit to the number inside a tent at any given time. Umpire clothing is not to be hung in the park or public areas, etc., but must go into their own vehicle.

Player Equipment (removal of bat, handing to on-deck batter) (offensive team responsibility)

- Removal will not be considered the responsibility of the umpire. Specifically, the removal of bats from the field will be the responsibility of the offensive team based on guidelines outlined previously in the 'On-Field' section.

Base Umpire / Other Field Umpires (Umpire's responsibility)

- Must be able to position themselves in a position at least 6-feet away from any player.

Umpire Conferences (Umpire's responsibility)

- Umpire conferences may be allowed to take place, as long as they are conducted in a safe manner such that the umpires can be away from any players and can maintain a 6-foot physical distance between one another.

Call Challenges / Protests (team and Umpire's responsibility)

- As mentioned, challenges / protests can be made by a coach in a safe and controlled manner. The umpire will have the authority to eject said coach if they feel their safe distance is being encroached upon and the coach has not respected any request to remain at a safe distance.

Water Bottles (Umpire's responsibility)

- No sharing of water bottles between umpires, and refillable water bottles will be strongly recommended.

Hand Sanitization (Umpire's responsibility)

- Umpires will be subject to any hand sanitization guidelines provided by the league / tournament organizer.
- Umpires will be asked to supply their own personal hand sanitizer.

Responsibility (Umpires and team responsibilities)

- Umpires are responsible for enforcing on-field guidelines during the game.
- Coaches and team officials are responsible for enforcing dugout and off-field guidelines related to their players and parents, before, during and after games.

Lightning / Inclement Weather (Umpire's responsibility)

- If the umpires suspend or cancel a game due to lightning / inclement weather all persons must return to the vehicle in which they arrived at the park, no congregating under tents, shelters etc.

Other Overall Considerations

- Restaurants – are there enough open locally, or with enough seating given social distancing to feed teams etc.



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

7. Mass Gathering Limitations

10 or less Participants Mass Gathering limitation

- No full teams or regular games – skill development / practices only where allowed.
- 1 – 2 coaches – 8 – 9 athletes.
- Consider grouping by positions to work on skills or small team challenges (3 – 4 per team).

Less than 30 Participants

- Practices and games where allowed.
- 2 teams depending on roster sizes.
- Coaches, umpires, volunteers, OASA representatives are not considered in the count of participants. Likely no spectators would be allowed. They would be counted as part of the spectators allowed under the appropriate colour coded region.
- 1 - 2 umpires.
- 1 - 2 OASA representatives.
- Volunteers – depends on park, entrances, numbers, etc. but estimated to be 2 - 4.

30 - 50 Participants

- Practices and games where allowed.
- 2 - 4 teams depending on roster sizes.
- Coaches, umpires, volunteers, OASA representatives are not considered in the count of participants. They would be counted as part of the spectators allowed under the appropriate colour coded region.
- 1 - 2 umpires / game.
- 1 - 2 OASA representatives.
- Volunteers – depends on park, entrances, numbers, etc. but estimated to be 4 – 10+.

50-75 Participants

- 3 – 5 teams depending on roster sizes.
- Coaches, umpires, volunteers, OASA representatives are not considered in the count of participants. They would be counted as part of the spectators allowed under the appropriate colour coded region.
- Maximum 2 umpires / game.
- Maximum 2 OASA representatives.
- Volunteers - depends on park, entrances, numbers etc. but estimated to be 4 – 10+.

75-100 Participants

- 5 – 8 teams depending on roster sizes.
- Coaches, umpires, volunteers, OASA representatives are not considered in the count of participants. They would be counted as part of the spectators allowed under the appropriate colour coded region.
- Maximum 2 umpires / game.
- Maximum 2 OASA representatives.
- Volunteers - depends on park, entrances, numbers etc. but est. 4 – 10+.



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

8. Reporting of Suspected COVID-19 Cases

- Refer suspected cases for COVID 19 testing.
- Predetermine emergency contacts and exact protocols with local authorities.
- Establish isolation area - on-site medical treatment clinics/facilities where an individual can be initially assessed.
- The isolation area should be equipped with the necessary supplies determined by the local authorities.
- The medic / personnel attending symptomatic persons should wear FFP2 masks, rubber / disposable gloves, and glasses or visors, which shall be disposed of immediately after use and the staff shall cleanse thoroughly afterwards.
- The symptomatic patient should be given a surgical mask before carrying out a careful evaluation.
- In the case of a symptomatic patient (Temperature 37.5, sore throat, runny nose, breathing difficulties and flu-like symptoms) based on clinical data, the case should be reported to local health authorities following the pre-established organizational channels, recommending when possible, to perform a COVID 19 test.
- Medic / staff must proceed, immediately after evaluation, with personal and area cleaning protocol as established by the local authorities; Safe Return to Baseball / Softball – Covid 19 Prevention Guidelines.
- If the subject does not fall within the definition of “case” or “suspect case”, they shall be sent home with the indication to contact his / her own physician.
- If a medic/personnel member falls within the definition of “case” or “suspect case”, it shall be reported immediately to local health authorities following the pre-established organizational channels.

Participants who become ill with signs and symptoms of COVID 19 while playing/on-site

- Activate Emergency Action Plan (EAP) COVID 19 Medical and Public Health Response Procedure for the specific venue.
- Participants (personnel, players, coaches, managers, spectators, etc.) who become ill at the field will be isolated and removed from the activity / event.
- OASA and / or the Host will designate an area at each field for isolation purposes.
- The activity/event will be shut down while:
 - 1) Equipment (dugouts / bases) are cleaned and sanitized.
 - 2) Participants sanitize their hands. (see section 10)
- The Activity Leader (coach, captain, OASA personnel, host) will advise the unwell participant to don a face covering or mask (if available) on their exit from the field.
- The Activity Leader (coach, captain, OASA personnel, host) will advise the unwell participant to go home immediately (in a private vehicle, if at all possible) and self-isolate, and contact Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-9000), their health care provider or visit their Local Health Department website to determine if further care is needed and learn about assessment centres.
- If leaving the field can not be done immediately (waiting for a private vehicle, or a parent / guardian), the participant will remain in the designated isolation area.
- The Coach / Manager / team Medic will advise OASA, so that the PSO can follow up with the unwell participant, and aid public health authorities with potential contact tracing in the event the unwell participant tests positive for Covid 19.
- If an OASA member at any OASA activity/event tests positive for Covid 19, their local public health unit will follow up with close contacts, who may include other OASA members. Other Team members who came in close contact with the infected participant may be required to self-isolate.

OASA will maintain an attendance listing record and advise participants if they have been in contact with a member who has tested positive for Covid 19 and to contact Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-9000), their health care provider or visit their Local Health Department Website to determine if further care is needed and learn about assessment centres.



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

COVID 19 positive cases, can only return to play / practice / participation after:

- 1) A doctor's note is provided and received by OASA leadership, or
- 2) The local public health authority/unit has advised that the individual is considered recovered per Ontario/Local Public health guidelines and cleared to return to play/work.

Note: The privacy of OASA members will be maintained; participants who may have been in close contact with a positive COVID 19 case will only be advised that someone at the training session / game / tournament has tested positive.

We extend our immense gratitude to all essential and front line workers. Be Safe.



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

9. Activity Leader Checklist

Prior to Departing for the Field

- Complete your personal wellness screening / checklist (COVID-19 Pre-Tournament Declaration questions).
- Sanitize all equipment that you will be using at the field.
- Ensure you have hand sanitizer in your bag for your athletes and to sanitize equipment at the field.
- Ensure you have your own water bottle and it is appropriately labelled with your name.
- Check your expected attendance listing (remember only Provincial Mandated # of participants including yourself) and remind those who are attending to complete their pre-departure wellness screening.

At the Field – On Arrival/At Check-in Location

- Arrive and set up at the identified Check-in location or a neutral location only with members of your team.
- Complete your on-field wellness check of all of your players.
- If all your athletes / coaches have passed all of the COVID-19 Declaration questions satisfactorily you are clear to direct them to the sideline area where they can put their belongings (remind them to keep 6-feet of spacing between their belongings and others' belongings).
- If an athlete / coach does not “pass” the screening, advise them to go home, and recommend that they call telehealth / their medical health provider or go to an assessment centre.
- Direct athletes / coaches to sanitize their hands on their way to the designated sideline area.

During the Session

- Maintain 6-foot distancing within the training session / games.
- Friendly reminders may be necessary at first.
 - No high-fives.
 - No team huddles.
- Avoid touching your own face as much as possible.
- Group participants into smaller groups to minimize points of contacts.
- Schedule breaks to hydrate and in that water break, sanitize equipment and wash / sanitize hands.
- If someone shows any symptoms (aside from things like coughing after swallowing a bug, sneezing due to allergies, etc.) during the session, remove them from the group, advise them to call telehealth / their medical professionals or to visit an assessment centre.

After the Session

- Encourage all participants to sanitize their equipment and hands.
- Sanitize any bats and other equipment (ex. helmets) before putting them back in their bag.
- Ensure all participants put any garbage / waste (water bottles) they may have into the garbage / waste bin at the venue, or to take it with them and dispose of it at their home.
- Ensure all participants leave the field and the venue in a timely manner (no congregating after in the parking lot).



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

10. Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to wash your hands



| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>Wet hands with warm water.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>Apply soap.</p> | <p>3</p> <p>Lather soap and rub hands palm to palm.</p> | <p>4</p> <p>Rub in between and around fingers.</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>Rub back of each hand with palm of other hand.</p> | <p>6</p> <p>Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand.</p> | <p>8</p> <p>Rinse thoroughly under running water.</p> |
| <p>9</p> <p>Pat hands dry with paper towel.</p> | <p>10</p> <p>Turn off water using paper towel.</p> | <p>11</p> <p>Your hands are now clean.</p> | |



OASA Return to Play Guidelines

How to use hand sanitizer



Sources:

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion [Public Health Ontario], Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for hand hygiene in all health care settings [Internet]. 4th ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/On-hand-hygiene.pdf?lang=en>

The information in this document is current as of March 16, 2020.

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OASA Return to Play Guidelines

11. How to wear a mask



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

When and How to Wear a Mask Recommendations for the General Public

Wearing a mask can help to prevent the spread of some respiratory illnesses, but it can also become a source of infection if not worn or discarded properly. If you need to wear a mask, you should also be sure to clean your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Wear a mask if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing) and are around other people.
- You are caring for someone who has COVID-19.
- Unless you have symptoms of COVID-19, there is no clear evidence that wearing a mask will protect you from the virus, however wearing a mask may help protect others around you if you are sick.



How to wear a mask:

- Before putting on your mask, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Secure the elastic loops of the mask around your ears. If your mask has strings, tie them securely behind your head.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Do not touch the front of the mask while you wear it. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if you accidentally touch your mask.

How to throw away your mask:

- Do not touch the front of your mask to remove it.
- Remove the elastic loops of the mask from around your ears or untie the strings from behind your head.
- Hold only the loops or strings and place the mask in a garbage bin with a lid.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after you have discarded your mask.

More information about masks:

- When a mask becomes damp or humid, replace it with a new mask.
- Do not reuse a single-use mask. Discard your mask when you have finished using it.

The information in this document is current as of April 10, 2020.

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OASA Return to Play Guidelines

13. Tryouts

All tryouts must adhere to maximum athlete and spectator limits as per their colour coded region.

All tryouts will be limited to a maximum of 50 participants per session.

Attendance records must be taken at all tryouts for contact tracing purposes, if necessary.

Spectators will be limited to a total of 50 persons which will include coaches, officials, umpires, parents, fans, etc.

All persons present must wear a face mask as per the On Field section of these guidelines for the entire tryout and practice physical distancing.