



SUBURBAN ATHLETICS 2021 COVID Guidelines-Update May 25, 2021

The purpose of this document is to provide parents, coaches and fans with assistance as they prepare for the season. The information and considerations provided are based on a review of available guidance from multiple reputable sources.

The following factors were considered in assessing the potential for COVID-19 transmission related to our upcoming season:

1. COVID-19 rates of participants in any given sport are directly proportional to prevailing community disease rates.
2. Participants in non-contact sports show lower rates of COVID-19 than contact sports.
3. Participants in outdoor sports show lower rates of COVID-19 than indoor sports.
4. Face mask use while participating in indoor sports results in COVID-19 rates comparable to the rates found in outdoor sports.
5. The great majority of sports-related spread of COVID-19 does not appear to occur during sports participation, but from social contact. Maximizing efforts to prevent this type of spread remains paramount. Social distancing, mask use, staying home while ill and proper hygiene must continue to be emphasized on the bench, while traveling, dining and interacting in the community.

COVID BASICS

- Avoid participation and attendance if sick (fever and/or symptoms)
- Wearing a cloth mask to reduce spread of your aerosol to others is **optional** (the mask captures some of your aerosol and reduces transmission to other people).
- Athletes not participating shall wear a mask.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet when not participating (bench, waiting for turn, etc.):
 - Teams practice/play in smaller “pods” of athletes to reduce exposure risk
 - “Close Contact” is based on the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation that 15+ minutes of close (within 6 feet) exposure to another increases risk of transmission.
- Continued emphasis on hygiene.
 - Hand sanitization/cleaning frequently (every time on and off field) – each athlete should be encouraged to have their own bottle.
 - Do not share water or food/snacks.
 - Minimize shared equipment as much as possible and sanitize that equipment frequently.

Note: With the advent of vaccines but also variants of the disease, the situation remains fluid. These guidelines are subject to change, as we learn about what works and as new guidance is made available from state and federal authorities.

- Suburban Athletics asks all families, coaches and spectators to watch the following CDC video to help protect everyone and to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community at all or our parks and facilities:
 - Youth Sports Video: Quick Tips to Protect Players from COVID-19 (1 minute)
 - https://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/vaccines/2020/14491449317247_COVID_YouthSportsAnimation_1min.mp4

WHAT IF ATHLETE IS SICK OR EXPOSED

- Any athlete that has symptoms and/or fever should not participate in any activity (meetings, practice, competition) and begin self-quarantine immediately.
 - Ensure that athletes with a positive COVID test (even if no symptoms) do not return to participation in practice or competition until:
 - At least 14 days have passed since positive test; AND
 - No fever (fever is temp of 100.4°F or more) without the use of fever-reducing medicine for at least 24 hours; AND
 - COVID symptoms (for example, cough shortness of breath, etc.) have improved;
 - Athletes may not return earlier if negative follow-up testing (cannot test out of isolation).
 - Any athlete that has “close contact” (teammate, household, friend – someone with over 15 minutes of exposure within 6 feet) should begin self-quarantine immediately. “Close contact” to an individual with a positive COVID test, athletes should not return until:
 - They have waited at least 14 days from last exposure to infected person; AND
 - Have no fever without use of fever-reducing medications; AND
 - No COVID symptoms (for example, cough shortness of breath, etc.) reported during daily monitoring.
 - “Close Exposure” to an individual with probable COVID (symptoms but not tested), athletes should not return until:
 - They have waited at least 14 days from last exposure to infected person; AND
 - No COVID Symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath, etc.).

General

Pre-Practice/Game Screening

- Athletes and coaches should check their temperature at home before attending practices or games. If an athlete or a coaching staff member has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, they should not attend practices or games.
- What if an athlete is sick or exposed? – SEE SECTION ABOVE
- A record should be kept of all athletes/coaches present at team activities.

COVID-19 League Contact

- The head coach of each team is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns for their team.
- All coaches, staff, officials and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Coaches, officials and staff will be trained on safety protocols.

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General – Tball/Softball/Baseball

Equipment

- Batting Helmet – Players are required to use their own helmet.
- Bat – When possible, players should use their own bat and not share bats.
- Catching equipment – Players should use their own catchers equipment.
 - TBall – catchers will not be utilized for 2021 season
 - Coaches will assign gear to athlete weekly, parents will sanitize equipment at end of week and return to coach.
- Balls
 - Coaches must sanitize shared equipment before and after each game.
 - Each team shall be responsible for supplying their own game balls.
 - In the event that a game ball goes out of play, the defensive team is responsible to retrieve the ball.
- Dugouts – Players should maintain social distancing unless they are actively participating in the game.

Practice/Games

- Practice – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while chatting, changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and minimizing congregating of players while waiting to bat. Practices should be conducted in “pods” of athletes, with the same 5-10 athletes always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Masks
 - Masks must be worn according to the governor’s mandate upon arrival to the venue and until the official warm-ups have started or an athlete is competing.
 - Masks are **optional** for Coaches and officials.
 - Masks are **optional** for athletes when they are not actively participating on the field.
 - Players may wear a mask while participating, however, a white mask is not allowed for pitchers.
- Habits
 - Athletes should be coached on staying away from touching their face.
 - Sunflower seeds are not allowed.
 - Pitchers are not allowed to lick their fingers/touch their mouth. A dead ball is to be called and the pitcher must sanitize their hands should this occur with game ball being taken out of play to be sanitized.
- Hand Sanitizer and/or Sanitizing Wipes – Athletes, coaches and umpires should provide their own hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes.

General Reminders for Athletes

- Personal Items – Each athlete should bring their own bag for personal items.
- Clothing/shoes/helmet – Must not be shared among athletes. Any items that are not currently being worn should be stored inside personal bag.
- Athletes should provide their own hand sanitizer.
- Water bottle – all athletes should bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.

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- Athletes should be reminded to tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.

Other Items

Social Distancing

- **Warm-ups/Stretching** – best efforts should be made to maintain social distancing of players.
- **Congregating of Athletes and/or Coaches** – congregating upon arrival to the field, prior to warm-ups, and immediately following the game is discouraged
- **Coach/Umpire Conferences** – social distancing to be maintained as much as possible when communicating with entire team or in smaller groups. Masks are **optional** for all players and coaches during huddles.
- **Elimination of Team Handshakes** – Teams should utilize other respectful ways to acknowledge each other before or after a competition, while maintaining social distancing (i.e., tip of hat, waver or other appropriate non-contact measures).
- **Interaction with Umpires** – Coaches should maintain social distancing when interacting with an umpire or any other individual on the field.
- **Pre-Game** – One coach from each team and umpires at home plate may have a meeting without players. Line-up exchange can take place.
- **Playing Field and Dugout Area** – Only essential personnel are allowed on the playing field. These are defined as athletes and coaches. Masks are **optional**.
 - All others (parents, family, friends) are considered non-essential personnel and are not to be in the dugout or extended dugout area.
 - Players should not leave the “dugout” area to congratulate other players.
- **Extended Dugout** – this is an area designated for members of the team to be when they are not on the field.

Spectators

- **Face Covering Requirements** – masks are **optional** when moving or unable to socially distance.

Umpires

Umpires are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illness and other such items. This monitoring remains with the coaching staff and league.

- Cloth face coverings are strongly encouraged if no governor’s mandate. Masks are **optional** for Umpires behind the plate and in the field.
- Have their own hand sanitizer.
- Use their own water bottles.

Coaches

- Communicate guidelines in clear manner to athletes and parents. Athlete safety is paramount.
- Communicate expectations regarding minimizing the spread of the virus.
- Remind players to use hand sanitizer prior to going on the competition field and after returning to the sideline.

Concessions

- A mask is **optional** by patrons when using the concession stand.

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- Patrons are advised to maintain social distancing of 6' when waiting to order and picking up their concessions order.
- Masks are ***optional*** for concession stand attendants.

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