

## United States Specialty Sports Association

### POST COVID-19 Return-to-Play Guidelines, Procedures and Recommendations

Updated 5/14/20 Version 1.5

#### POST COVID-19 200.1: Event Procedures – ALL SPORTS

1. Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
2. Prior to any events taking place, each State Director must submit the requested information to the National Program Director. Once a decision has been determined the State Director and Sport Chairperson will be notified.
3. A team and event e-mail must be sent to all teams, team managers, coaches, players/parents, and officials/referees 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.

**ABC: If a player or coach is running a fever or is having difficulty breathing abnormally, then player / coach will not be allowed to practice or play in practice / game / tournament.**

**Return to play will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and severity of each case will be considered.**

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. No group prayers 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).

**ABC: No handshakes / high fives / chest bumps during practices, games or tournaments**

6. Directors, players, umpires and spectators must adhere to the guidelines from CDC, state and local authorities regarding potential state travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders, including return to state of residence.
7. 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.

Other things to be aware of:

- Sneeze into arm / elbow
- No tobacco chewing and

- No players spitting

## **POST COVID-19 201.1: USSSA Baseball & Fastpitch Return to Play**

### **Recommended Best Practices for the Field-of-Play:**

1. Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
2. 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.
3. Where possible, consider options for limiting both the pitching and the scorecard exchanges, in order to reduce person-to-person contact.
4. 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.

#### **ABC: Do not use dugouts unless for use of disposing trash**

5. Encourage parents to supply their players with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings/quarters/periods.

#### **ABC: Encourage limited to no sharing of equipment (bats, hats, fielding gloves, batting gloves, or catchers gear). Coaches and Players are recommended to bring your own wipes and / or sanitizer.**

6. 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.

#### **ABC: Same**

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.

#### **ABC: No dugout usage unless tournaments allow it. Make sure field is clean of trash.**

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.*

#### **ABC: same as #7 above**

9. Directors should consider adjusting the playing formats and increasing the amount of time between games, to minimize overlap and traffic flow where needed.

#### **ABC: Practice and event schedules have been designed to prevent cross contamination between teams and events. Teams should begin and end their practices on time not overlapped being on the field at the same time.**

10. Ban the use of sunflower seeds.

#### **ABC: Same...food or beverage. Teams should not bring water or Gatorade coolers**

**Please use common sense when using these guidelines and best practices.**