

A photograph of a baseball on a field with a green background and brown dirt in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image in large, white, bold, sans-serif font. A thin orange horizontal line is positioned between the words 'LEAGUE' and 'RETURN'.

**GREAT FALLS
LITTLE LEAGUE
COVID-19 RETURN
TO PLAY**

As of February 2021

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INTRODUCTION

To promote the health and safety of everyone involved with Great Falls Little League (“GFL”) activities, and consistent with the latest authoritative guidance from the Virginia Department of Health, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), Little League International, and others, GFL's Return to Play (“RTP”) Committee has adopted this Plan for supplemental protocols, which will apply until amended or rescinded.

The Board of Directors has approved the following supplemental COVID-19 safety protocols for the 2021 Spring Regular season, which is expected to begin in March and run through early June. These protocols presume the Spring season will occur during continued Phase 3 of Virginia’s COVID-19 reopening. They will be adjusted as appropriate and necessary if circumstances or government guidance change.

1. SEASON OVERVIEW

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| State / Local Guidelines | GFL recognizes that its fields are public facilities and we shall follow all Virginia and Fairfax County regulations on approval for youth sports return to play, field usage, and crowd volumes. |
| Safety Training Session Date | Safety training sessions will be held for all Managers and Coaches on the evening of March 8 th . |

BASEBALL DIVISION-SPECIFIC TIMELINES

| | AA, AAA and Majors Divisions | Coach Pitch and Tee Ball Divisions |
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| First Games | First Games will be weeknights the week of April 5 th | April 10 th |
| Games | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be 2 games per week (1 weeknight and 1 Saturday; there may be times when teams play 2 weeknights and no Saturdays) - No games will be played Memorial Day weekend - Make-up games shall be played in the Spring season (likely on Sundays) - Saturday games will have additional 'buffer' time placed between games to minimize player and spectators interaction - Spring games will follow all traditional GFL local playing rules for play time, game length, pitching rules, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teams play 1 game per week on Saturday - Games will be played through June 5th - Games for Coach Pitch and Tee Ball will not be played Memorial Day weekend - Games will last 1 hour with time allotted for warm-up prior to the start of the game |
| Practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teams will have one practice per week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teams will have one practice per week |

SOFTBALL DIVISION-SPECIFIC TIMELINES

GFLC softball teams in the Coach Pitch, AA, AAA and Majors divisions play games against teams from McLean Little League. Games will be played starting the weekend of March 22nd. Majors and AAA games will be primarily Mondays and Fridays. AA games will be Monday or Friday with a weekend game, too. Game days for Coach Pitch are still TBD. There is the possibility of some Sunday games based on limited field availability to ensure games are well spaced out, both physically and time-wise. (If any of your players have religious concerns about Sunday games, please let us know (gflc22066@gmail.com)).

2. PLAYER SAFETY BEFORE PRACTICES AND GAMES

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| <p>Health Screening</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents, players, coaches and family members must take their temperature and screen themselves before leaving their house for any practices, games or team events. - Parents and players must remain home if they have any illness or symptoms of COVID-19 - Parents are responsible for ensuring that no child attends any practice or game if they do not feel well, have a fever, cough, or respiratory symptoms, or any known exposure to a person with COVID-19 until cleared by a medical professional. It is essential to the health and safety of our Great Falls community that this occurs before every game and practice. - Parents should review league safety rules with their children prior to first practice. - Parents or players MUST complete the Health Check on the TeamSnap application prior to each game or practice. Eight hours before game/practice this option shall be available in TeamSnap. Managers may not allow any player to attend a game or practice without a completed passed Health Check. |
| <p>Player/Family Arrival</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Masks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Players should wear masks after being dropped off until settled into their assigned seating area at the field. They shall also wear masks upon leaving the dugout until reaching their car. o Masks MUST be worn in the dugout area throughout a game or practice. Masks may be removed while moving to the 'In-The-Hole' space and preparing to bat, as well as actively on the field of play for offense and defense.. - Players and families shall look to ensure appropriate social distancing from other players while moving from the parking lot to the playing field - Players shall proceed to their assigned (numeric) player area space in the player/bench area. All equipment shall remain in this area throughout the game when not being used. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Players shall provide their own chair to use in the extended player area outside the dugout. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unless a medical emergency, parents/family members shall not, at any time, enter the dugout/player areas - Players shall apply hand sanitizer upon entering dugout/player area prior to taking the field and prior to field departure at the end of the game. They're also encouraged to apply each time coming off the field on defense. |
| Spectators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No parent or spectator shall attend any GFL game if they do not feel well, have a fever, cough, or respiratory symptoms, or any known exposure to a person with COVID-19 until cleared by a medical professional - Spectators will not be allowed in the bleachers this season and must remain at least 10 feet clear of the dugouts at all times. - For Nike 1 & 2, spectators are encouraged to bring their own seating and watch from behind the outfield fences. They are not to stand/sit near the player area/dugouts or behind home plate. - For Nike 3, spectators are encouraged to bring their own chairs and sit on the hill or in the bleachers and are asked to stay clear of the fence lines. - For Nike 6, spectators are encouraged to spread out along the fence lines away from the dugouts / player areas. - In accordance with the latest State of Virginia requirements, spectators MUST wear masks over their nose and mouth at all times. Ten feet of physical distance must be maintained between spectators who are not members of the same household. - Spectators may not watch games or practices from behind home plate. Spectators are restricted from the area behind the traditional dugout, around home plate, to the other team's traditional dugout area. |
| Water & Food Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Players must provide their own water bottles. Names must be written and visible on the bottle. - No food, gum or sunflower seeds will be allowed this season. - It is highly encouraged that players eat before arriving. |
| Equipment Rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>No Equipment Sharing:</u> Players must provide all of their own equipment. There will be no sharing of equipment including bats, hats or uniforms during games/practices. - <u>Sanitizer:</u> Players are encouraged to have their own personal bottle of hand sanitizer to use before, during and after the game. Managers will be supplied team sanitizer pending availability. - <u>Catchers Gear:</u> Players who like to play the Catcher position are encouraged to provide their own catcher's gear to limit sharing of equipment. However, the league will work to ensure individual catcher's gear for all teams who may wish to |

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| | catch during a game and develop a sanitizing protocol with managers to distribute between players, between games. |
| Coach Training | - The league will host a live safety briefing for all coaches and managers prior to the start of the season to review the health and safety protocols. |

3. PRACTICE AND GAME CONDUCT

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| <p>“Covid” Coach</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There will be a ‘Covid Coach’ on each team, added specifically to drive safety guidelines and player adherence to COVID protocols, such as distancing, sanitizing, etc. This new 4th coach shall assist the team to ensure that player safety conduct is followed. |
| <p>Player Interaction</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This should include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, and any group celebrations. |
| <p>Warmups</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Running/Stretching</u>: While warming up, players shall remain socially distanced. Cones may be used to indicate lanes for kids to ensure distancing for running and basic warm-ups. - <u>Throwing</u>: Players shall have an identified warm-up partner and a single ball provided. The ball should be returned specifically to a coach for handling. - <u>Batting Cages</u>: , Coaches should make their best efforts to throw BP with a batting glove. Coaches ONLY should handle all ‘picks’ of balls without engaging players. Players must remain socially distant while waiting to enter the cage. Coaches must direct lines and players should avoid contact while entering/existing cages. - <u>Pitchers and Catchers</u>: Balls for pitching warm-ups shall be provided by and returned to the bench coach for handling. - <u>Infield</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o When taking “Infield” practice, the team may continue to have a brief period of time to field before the start of the game. o Coaches shall ensure a small number of baseballs are used for ‘infield’ and then returned to the bench coach for handling. |
| <p>Fields / Dugouts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separated areas shall be provided for each player in the dugout/player area. All equipment/bags/water bottles are to remain in the player’s assigned area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Markers, tape or paint will be used to mark off bench spaces. o Players will be assigned a space that will be theirs for the season. Bags are to be placed under the space or hung on fence at that spot. Water bottles and all |

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| | <p>personal equipment including gloves shall remain in area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each player must bring a chair that will additionally mark their “spot” where their equipment will be kept and where they will remain when not playing on offense or defense. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scoreboards shall not be in effect this season. - Lineups may be hung as normal; however, players shall be instructed not to touch rosters/clipboards. - Gates shall continue to remain closed during innings. |
| Coaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches must wear masks throughout all games and practices - Coaches will set-out hand-sanitizer in dugout before game (if available) - Coaches should avoid any unnecessary handling of baseballs during the course of the game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The goal is to only have the designated bench coach handle ball cleaning and to manage returned foul balls - The Coach must send attendance of players and coaches after every team activity, including practices and games |
| Line-Ups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lineups shall be distributed to other coach electronically (email/text) |
| First Aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches shall ensure that masks are worn, and gloves will be available in cases of needing to apply first aid support - Ice packs will be wiped prior to handling by a player - Antiseptic wipes and Band-Aids should only be applied by a coach with gloves or by the player. - Whenever possible, coaches may enlist parental support to execute first aid outside of the player area where feasible. |
| Umpires | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Plate’ umpire placement for calling Balls/Strikes shall be from behind the pitcher’s mound or a safe 6ft distance behind the catcher. - Umpires should endeavor to maintain social distancing from players and coaches whenever possible. - Pre-game plate meetings shall be performed with appropriate socially distance ensuring limited contact. - Umpires shall avoid handling any baseballs this season. New baseballs needed after a foul ball shall be provided by the bench coach from the team on defense. - Masks are required for all base umpires and are encouraged for all umpires whenever they can be safely and effectively worn including between innings. Masks must be worn while entering and exiting the field. |

4. GAME PLAY - OFFENSE

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| Game / Bench Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The Bench Coach will be the assigned (only) individual to open and close the dugout door- Following a player's at-bat:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o If they are put out at any base, they should retrieve their own bat prior to returning to the dugouto If they should reach base, the bench coach (only) shall retrieve the bat<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The bat shall be set aside until the player returns to the dugout and takes it back to their space |
| Returning to the Field | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Players will line-up by assigned number and return to the field one at a time- Players shall not exit the bench area/dugout until the other team has lined-up to leave the field |

5. GAME PLAY - DEFENSE

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| Game Balls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each team is responsible for providing defensive balls for game play (Minimum 3 balls per game) - The Bench Coach shall be responsible for defensive balls and rotating them to the pitcher as needed |
| Foul Ball Retrieval | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 'Bench Coach' shall direct retrieval - Only defensive team players shall retrieve balls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Players on the bench shall be directed to retrieve balls o If there are no bench players, an alternative coach will be tasked with retrieval - Balls shall be brought to Bench Coach for wiping prior to returning to game play - We ask that fans refrain from chasing after foul balls |
| Warm-Up Balls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaches shall make best effort to take warm-up balls, from both pre-game and between innings and move them from a 'clean' bucket to a 'used' bucket ensuring minimal ball reuse during the course of a game. |
| Catchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Majors/AAA: The Catcher shall put gear on by themselves - AA/CP: Only identified 'Bench Coach' shall assist player in putting on gear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coach shall apply hand sanitizer prior to assisting - The Bench Coach shall sanitize any shared catcher's equipment between player changes. |
| Mound Visits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All mound visits shall remain appropriately distanced - During pitching changes, the coach shall not take the ball from the pitchers |
| Leaving the Field | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Players shall line up according to assigned number on the fence and enter the dugout one at a time. They shall proceed directly to their designated bench area spot. |

6. POST-GAME PROTOCOLS

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| Game End | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No post-game team handshakes. Teams shall stand distanced outside of dugouts and perform courtesy hat-tip to display sportsmanship- Post-game team meetings must remain socially distanced- Airline exit-like procedures from dugout after game- The Bench Coach will provide hand sanitizer to each player on their way out of the dugout- Game balls shall be wiped down prior to going into the bucket |
| Participant Tracking | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- GFLL shall deploy the use of the TeamSnap application to assist coaches in the tracking of all participants for team games and practices. All families are expected to provide availability updates to ensure that effective attendance is tracked. The league will coordinate with team Managers to reference the attendance list for any necessary contact tracing and communications as needed. |
| Pre/Post Game Socializing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Players and families are asked to exit the park as soon as the practice ends, or the team is dismissed following a game. We request that you do not linger on the grounds.- Unofficial pre- and post-practice or game activities (e.g.; Wall Ball, Tennis Court baseball, Pickle, Relay Races) should be discouraged. If they do occur, the activities should have constant adult supervision to assure appropriate social distancing guidelines are being followed. |

