COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines

The State of Washington classifies softball as “moderate risk sports” for the transmission of COVID-19 and has specific guidance for restart and recommendations for safely conducting these activities. For more information, please visit Governor Inslee’s Sporting Activities COVID-19 Requirements

Critical to our success of return to play in a safe and healthy way will be our collective cooperation and vigilance with COVID-19 mitigation strategies. We recognize we all have a role to play in reducing the risks of spreading the disease as we come together through employing a number of best practices and strategies. COVID Waiver: The COVID waiver/participant agreement must be signed pre-season before allowing participation. This waiver will include:

1. Full list of potential COVID-19 symptoms

2. Expectations and responsibilities of each willing participant to self-check for any symptoms of illness and self-checking temperatures daily before attending any/all NGSSA activities/events.

3. Agreement to stay home if ANY COVID-19 related symptoms are present AND to notify team Health and Safety Officer of potential or confirmed illness and any pending COVID-19 test as well as reporting results of testing as soon as known due to potential exposure of other participants.

4. Agreement to stay home if they become aware of any contact with a known case of COVID-19 or a suspected case, pending testing.

5. Signatures of both parents and participants to certify honest disclosures on an ongoing basis.

**Daily Screening Procedure:**

Each NGSSA team will appoint one assistant coach/volunteer to assume the role of the Health and Safety officer. This individual will:

1. Track attendance at each practice, game, event for the sake of contact tracing; Small groups if needed for any close-contact drills.

2. Ensure that each participant before each activity (practice, meeting, game) has completed the self-check log on TeamSnap app.

3. Report to team Safety Officer any suspect cases or players who needed to be sent home or any reported illness by any participant.

Stay home if sick or if close contact with someone with COVID-19 Athletes, coaches, umpires, spectators and any other paid or volunteer staff should be required to stay home if they feel unwell, show any signs of COVID-19, or have been exposed to a confirmed case or close contact. Any person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is a close contact of someone with confirmed COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional. Those who are excluded from training or contests due to COVID-19 symptoms or because they are close contacts must follow King County or Snohomish County isolation and quarantine guidance before returning to play.

**Masks and Face Coverings**

1. All Coaches, umpires, and any other volunteer staff must wear face coverings at all times. Any spectators must follow the Department of Health facial covering order.
2. Players if no mask mandate is explicitly required by the State or County, players must wear masks/face coverings when in close contact areas and in areas where physical distancing remains a challenging or not feasible such as in the dugouts. All players regardless of division are encouraged to, but not required to, wear masks or face coverings while on the field of play. NGSSA will be providing all players with a face mask as a part of their uniform.

**Player equipment**

* Players are required to only use their own equipment, including helmet, hats, bats, batting gloves, fielding gloves and catcher’s equipment. There will be absolutely no sharing of baseball equipment (bats can be shared if wiped down after each use or if players have batting gloves).
* Players and families are strongly encouraged to clean and disinfect bags and equipment after each use by a parent or guardian.

**Practices**

• Coach/Safety Manager of team will confirm all players completed the self-check log on TeamSnap app.

• Players and families should maintain physical distancing while approaching fields.

• Spectators are not permitted to attend practices. Families are encouraged to “drop off” their player at practice with coaching staff and maintain a safe distance from the event.

• Players will set their equipment spaced six feet apart along the fences or sidelines, players will avoid confined spaces including dugouts and bleachers for all practices.

• All players, coaches, umpires, and volunteers will wash their hands with soap or hand sanitizer before entering the field of play.

• All participants (players, coaches, umpires, volunteers, and spectators) will wear a mask or face covering as mandated NGSSA, and Governor Inslee’s Sporting Activities COVID-19 Requirements.

• Team stretching and warm-up drills must be structured to avoid close contact. Coaches are encouraged to structure and limit warm-up drills to avoid formation of lines that allow for close contact between players.

• All practice drills must be designed and executed to optimize physical distancing between participants to include tee drills, soft toss, and the formation of lines awaiting repetitions.

• All players, coaches, umpires, and volunteers will wash their hands with soap or hand sanitizer at the end of practice.

**Games/Scrimmages**

• Fans- Fan attendance is governed by the Governor Inslee’s Sporting Activities COVID-19 Requirements. All fans must remain 6’ away from anyone that is not their immediate family or household.

• Social distancing team- players and coaches will remain 6’ a part while in the dugout areas and at all times unless it is during the game on the field. The dugout area most likely will need to be extended into the bleachers (behind a fence)

• Health Screening- parents, players, coaches, and family members must take their temperature and screen themselves before leaving their house. Players will need to follow the Daily Screening Procedure.

• Illness / Symptoms- parents, players, coaches, and family members must remain home if they have any illness or symptoms of COVID-19

• Game balls- each team will be supply a ball to be used when their team is on defensive. Umpires, coaches, and spectators will avoid contact with the game balls, allowing defensive players to retrieve all foul balls, whether in or out of the field of play

• Sanitizer- All players, coaches, umpires, and volunteers will wash their hands with soap or hand sanitizer before and after the game/scrimmage.

• No sharing team equipment- helmets, gloves (bats can be shared if wiped down after each use or if players have batting gloves)

• No shared team cooler or drinks. Everyone must bring their own.

• Meetings- No team meetings where everyone isn’t at least 6’ apart.

• Conference- Home plate conference and other meetings should be conducted electronically prior to the game when possible. If required to happen at the field everyone must stay 6’ apart

• Equipment spacing- Equipment should be spaced out 6’ apart behind the dugout or elsewhere.

Post-Game Sportsmanship - There should be no physical touching to including high fives or handshakes. At the end of games, players will line up on respective baselines and cheer, shout, wave, or tip hats to the opposing team and umpires.

**Umpires**

Umpires will be required to wear a mask and socially distance when possible. Umpires can be positioned behind Pitcher or behind Catcher.

Drinks and snacks

* All participants including players, coaches, and umpires are required to maintain their own water bottles to all activities clearly marked with their name. There will be no shared water coolers permitted.
* No spitting by any player, coach, umpire, spectator or team volunteer.
* Gum or seeds are not allowed by any player, coach, umpire, spectator or team volunteer.
* There will be no sharing of snacks or any food items including post-game snacks. Players should avoid bringing snacks. If this cannot be helped Snacks must be individual, pre-packaged food for individual consumption. When consuming snacks Players need to be at least 10 feet from all other players, coaches, spectators.

Reporting-

Any Player, Coach, Umpire, or Spectator who tests positive for COVID 19 must report to their coach, and appropriate Division Director within 12 hours of finding out.

Those who are excluded from training or contests due to COVID-19 symptoms or because they are close contacts must follow DOH and local public health isolation and quarantine guidance before returning to training or contests. Which will require a MD clearance and negative COVID test

If one player/coach/volunteer reports a positive test, that exposed team members and coaching staff exposed to the individual must pause play/quarantine according to the CDC guidelines.