

Town of Onondaga “Return-to-Play” Adult Softball guidelines

The following suggestions are a general outline of procedures to help mitigate risk and allow for a return of semi-regular play of **ADULT SOFTBALL**. Many of the suggestions and the attached waiver outline were pulled from USSSA Return-to-Play guidelines. The recreation department recommends these measures to increase the safety for participants while still accommodating the recreation and leisure needs of the community.

Social distancing

- Players will be asked to social distance while waiting to bat, or while sitting in the bench area.
 - *While in the field, players are well over the 6’ minimum for social distancing.*
 - *This does not include plays where players are tagging a runner, making a close force out, or two players of the same team are making a play on a ball. Players will be ordered not to linger in close proximity after a play.*
- The League discourages spectators to attend games.
 - *The only non-players allowed on the bench will be scorekeepers and bat-attendants.*
 - *Any spectators that do attend will be asked to sit away from the team area of the benches.*
 - *Even during a regular season spectator attendance is usually low, less than 6 spectators per team on any given night per team.*
- Masks on field not mandatory except for catcher and umpire, who must wear masks correctly at all times.
 - *Because of the built-in wire or metal nose clip built into most masks, wearing a mask in the field creates an injury risk while running, sliding or being tagged. However, people can choose to wear masks if they want to.*
 - *There is no lead-offs or stealing, so players will not be in close proximity when on base waiting for a pitch.*
- Teams on the bench must wait for the field to completely clear before taking the field.
- Gatherings before or after games will be disallowed.

Sanitizing

- Provide paper towels and bulk sanitizer for teams to use on benches before and after games.
 - *Incoming teams should sanitize bench/dugout area before play begins.*
 - *We can provide a jug of sanitizer and a roll of paper towels at each field for teams to clean benches before each game.*
- Teams will be responsible for cleaning up any trash left after games.
 - *Bins are available for cans, bags and other debris.*
- Teams should bring hand sanitizer to each game for personal use.
- Teams should be discouraged from using sunflower seeds to avoid spitting near others.
- Teams should bring disinfecting wipes to wipe down bats between batters.
 - *Have “batter on deck” retrieve and sanitize bats.*

Minimizing contact

- Handshakes and high fives will be highly discouraged between both teammates and opposing teams before, during and after the game.
- Players will be allowed to use PPE as long as it does not interfere with the game or create a safety hazard for players.
 - *Ex. no hard masks, large plastic sneeze shields, full body surgical suits or large goggles.*
- No sharing of drink containers or use of communal water jugs.
- Each team will use their own “Game Balls”, so the same ball is not touched by both teams
 - *When coming off the field, the pitcher takes the ball in with them.*
- Use a single point of contact when discussing rules, lineup changes and comparing scores thought the games.
 - *Masks should be worn when coming into close contact.*
- Everyone is encouraged to use their own bat.
 - *Because bats are expensive, this is unlikely.*
- Refrain from touching bats or equipment belonging to the opposing team.
- Refrain from touching benches, gates or fences.
 - *Players are encouraged to bring their own chairs to games.*

Reducing liability

- Have all teams sign a liability waiver before the start of the season.

- *All teams will be provided a waiver which all team members will need to sign. Captains will submit the completed waiver form to the office. All players including subs (even those who may never play) must sign waiver.*
- Continue to post signs and mark off equipment not cleared for use by public.
 - *Signs with social distancing rules should be posted on backstops at each field.*
- Individuals not following program guidelines will be asked to leave.
- Public bathrooms will remain closed

Prohibiting Play

- Individuals SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE if:
 - *They are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by the CDC.*
 - *Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.*
 - *Are a vulnerable individual with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, asthma, or whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy and other conditions requiring such therapy.*
- Captains and managers are responsible for ensuring sick players are not playing.
- Persons displaying obvious symptoms will be asked to leave.
 - *Any time a player is asked to leave, it should be noted by the program facilitator and reported to the office within 24 hours.*