



## WSSL SPRING 2021 RULES FOR COVID-19 SAFETY

*These rules apply for all in-person WSSL activities and must be followed to the fullest extent while the current COVID-19 Pandemic continues. WSSL will continue to monitor public health guidance and reserves the right to modify these rules should public guidance or circumstances change.*

WSSL Parents, Players and Volunteers are responsible for enforcing this policy together. Parents are asked to review this policy with players before team functions to make sure that their child or children follow both the policy and its intended purposes. Together we can make this work.

**Failure to follow these guidelines may result in loss of practice time, team suspensions, individual discipline for managers and coaches, or stoppage of game play.**

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

- Players, Parents, and Volunteers – if you are not feeling well, **STAY HOME**. If a member of your family tests positive for COVID-19, we ask that you please report this to your team manager, and WSSL will notify families anonymously that there was potential exposure to a “member of the WSSL community.” **Anyone directly exposed to COVID-19 should stay home until they receive written clearance by a medical professional.**
  - The CDC defines close contact as: *“Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.”*
- If there is a reported exposure to COVID-19, a sub-committee of the WSSL Executive Committee (“The Covid Committee”) has been formed to respond to such situations. The Covid Committee will follow the Virginia Department of Health and Fairfax County guidelines in making decision relating to “return to play” for affected players or teams.
  - Managers: If you are advised of a potential exposure within your team, you must immediately pause all team activities and report the potential exposure to the Covid Committee. Activities must remain paused for a reasonable time for the Covid Committee to assess your situation (usually 24-48 hours).
- By participating in a WSSL in-person function, you are certifying that your child does not have COVID-19 symptoms and is cleared to play. Parents will be required to report to their manager and/or covid coach prior to practices and games that their child is symptom free. Prior to games, umpires will ask managers if all players are symptom free. Symptoms and circumstances that will prevent a player or volunteer from participating include:
  - Fever
  - Shortness of breath
  - Cough
  - Sore Throat
  - Congestion
  - Nausea & vomiting

- Headache
  - Unexplained Muscle/Joint pain
  - Diarrhea
  - Chills
  - Loss of taste & smell
  - A pending or scheduled test due to exposure or symptoms of a player or volunteer or someone with whom the player or volunteer has had close contact
- **WSLL MASK POLICY.**
    - *Players are required to wear a mask at all times, except when actively participating in a game or practice. Players are “strongly encouraged” to wear a mask when actively participating.*
    - *All other persons, including managers, coaches, volunteers and spectators are required to wear a mask at all times.*
  - In accordance with the current guidelines for the Commonwealth of Virginia, “outdoor recreational sports should maintain ten feet of physical distance between all instructors, participants, and spectators, where practicable.” Any portable shelters (like shade tents) should not be shared by multiple families. Fans and parents should refrain from entering the sections outside of the fenced area of the field that will be used by teams as expanded dugout spaces.
  - There shall be no sharing of equipment of any kind during games or practices, unless the equipment is first sanitized by a volunteer. To alleviate the possible need to share equipment, WSLI will issue extra equipment to teams as needed. Teams should be able to issue helmets and bats for the full season to all players who need these items. Teams will also be issued extra catcher’s gear. To the extent possible, teams should minimize sharing of catcher’s gear at single events (practice or game). Regardless, shared catcher’s gear must be sanitized between each use.
  - Players are required to have a parent, guardian or responsible adult available during all activities (practices, games, etc) in case there is inclement weather that would require a player to shelter in a car per the WSLI Thunder and Lighting Policy, Local Rule V.E (p. 27 of 2021 Gray Book).
  - No food is permitted on WSLI fields or in dugouts. This includes sunflower seeds and chewing gum. No shared beverages. No spitting.
  - Players should wash or sanitize hands whenever possible. Player coming off the field after an inning or an at bat must wash or sanitizing their hands before returning to the field. Hand sanitizer will be available in all dugouts, and extra handwashing stations will be available at Byron Park.

### **COVID COACH:**

- Each team must have a designated parent or coach (the “Covid Coach”) who is responsible for ensuring the team is complying with all Covid safety rules during games. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Monitoring social distancing, hand sanitizing, sharing of equipment, and restrictions on food, gum, seeds, spitting and physical contact during celebrations
  - Monitoring mask wearing for team players and volunteers (coaches, scorekeepers, etc.)
  - Marking off the extended dugout and assigning players seating areas before games to ensure social distancing
  - Assisting the manager in conducting pre-game symptom checks
- Covid Coaches, like other team volunteers in close proximity with our players, must wear a mask.

## **PRACTICES:**

- Managers and coaches should use extra caution to space out practices. Do not show up early if there is a practice at the same location beforehand, and do not leave late if there is one afterward.
- Managers and coaches must emphasize social distancing of players and coaches during practices.
- Parents are encouraged to either watch from a distance or remain in their car. Per the general guidelines, a parent or guardian must remain at the practice location in case of inclement weather.
- Team practice equipment must be sanitized following each practice.
- All team volunteers (Managers, CORs, Practice Coaches, and any parents helping with practice) must wear a mask during practice.

## **GAMES:**

### *Arrival*

- Families must not arrive earlier than their designated arrival time.
- Families should stick to their designated field and parking area. Parking areas will be assigned to each field by WSSL, and families are asked to NOT park outside of their designated area. The parking assignments are as follows: Forbes & Phillips (Church Lot), Yankee (Dirt Lot – closer to cell tower), Ebbets (dirt lot closer to the Accotink trail), Wrigley (Paved Lot). Individuals requiring a handicap parking space are exempt from this policy.
- Families should keep their distance from other families while in the parking areas and at their designated field.

### *Pre-Game*

- Field preparation should be done by coaches, designated volunteers, or the gray hats on duty. Volunteers must be masked.
- Managers should work with their team and the other team's manager to maintain appropriate distancing during warm-ups.
- Managers should not pass paper line-ups pre-game; phone cameras or email should be used. Plate conferences should be done at a distance of 6 feet or more.
- **Arrival Times and Pregame Batting Practice:**
  - On all days, including Saturdays, pregame batting practice will be permitted in accordance with local rules (i.e., visiting team 60 minutes prior to game time; home team 40 minutes prior to game time). However, on Saturdays, the Ebbets Cage will only be available prior to the first game of the day. Managers and coaches will be responsible for ensuring social distancing during pregame batting practice.
  - During pregame batting practice, teams must form staging areas outside the outfield fences of their respective fields, maintaining at least 10 feet of distance from spectators. Teams may not leave gear or congregate in areas behind the dugouts, extended dugouts, or backstops while previous games remain in play. Parents and family members should remain in vehicles until their respective game fields are cleared from the prior round of games.
  - Batting cages will be otherwise closed while games are in-play.
  - Teams playing on Phillips, Forbes, and Ebbets (after the first game of the day on Saturdays) will have no pregame batting practice and should arrive no earlier than 35 minutes before game time.

- **Pregame Plate Conference:**

- In addition to topics already addressed in WSLL Local Rules, at all pregame plate conferences during the Spring 2021 season, managers must (a) certify to the umpire that no player has reported with Covid-19 symptoms; and (b) identify the team's "COVID Coach" for the game.

### *Game*

- Teams will be responsible for game balls used when in the field. At the end of each half inning, players will return ball to the pitcher or catcher who will keep it until next half inning. The offensive team should refrain from touching the ball. Umpires may inspect the ball but should not be in regular contact with it. Each team should be prepared to have at least 3 game balls.
- Individuals retrieving bats should hold bat by the barrel. Bats should be wiped down following use.
- Contact between players should be minimized. Players should refrain from physical contact that does not involve making a play in the field (e.g., high fives, fist bumps, etc.).
- Scorekeeper boxes may be used by a volunteer to operate the electronic score board. The microphone equipment may be used at the risk of the user. All equipment that is used in the score box must be sanitized before and after the game. Only immediate family of the scoreboard operator are allowed in the box at one time.
- **Extended Dugouts:** WSLL will implement Extended Dugouts to permit distancing of players.
  - **Procedures:**
    - Areas behind home plate (including bleachers) are off limits to spectators.
    - Prior to the start of each game, each team should mark off its Extended Dugout area. The area may proceed from home plate as far down the baseline as the team deems necessary.
    - Every player must be assigned a designated spot within the Extended Dugout. Spots must be at least 10 feet from one another. Players should bring chairs or stools to use at their designated spots.
    - Players shall leave all personal gear at their designated spot, except bats, which will be located inside the dugout.
    - During the game, players must return to and remain at their designated spot unless actively participating in the game (e.g., playing the field, batting, or preparing to bat).
    - When not actively participating in the game, all players must wear a face covering (mask/gaiter).
    - Only the on-deck and in-the-hole batters may be in the dugout.
    - Prior to the game, all bats shall be lined up along the fence inside the dugout. A player may grab his/her bat when exiting the dugout to bat. If a player strikes out, he/she should return his/her bat to the dugout, and then return to his/her designated spot. Any coach or player may retrieve bats from the home plate area, but bats should be handled by the barrel. Once a bat is returned to the dugout, a coach or player must wipe it down with disinfectant, and return it to the fence inside the dugout.
    - A retired player shall return to his/her designated spot.
  - **Spectators must remain in designated areas along the outfield fence line. No spectators are allowed behind the infield fences or extended dugouts.** Exceptions are allowed for one scorekeeper per team and one covid coach per team.

### *Post-Game*

- There will be no post-game handshakes. Players are encouraged to stand at a distance to recognize each other's efforts (e.g., tip of the hat, applause, and shouts of "thank you" or "nice game."). Sportsmanship is important.

- Managers and coaches will be responsible for clearing out each dugout/extended dugout area, including garbage removal.
- There will be NO team snack.
- Families should promptly leave the park following the game.
- Post-game conferences will not take place on the field, or in the park where the game took place unless it is the last game of the day. These meetings can be done on-line or during a practice.

**FINAL NOTE:** These guidelines are designed to minimize risk and maximize the safety of our youth players and their families. Compliance should factor greatly into our ability to play a full season without interruption. Every family's cooperation is paramount to our success now more than ever.