

NCIL Baseball and Softball

COVID-19 Return to Play Rules: Frequently Asked Questions

June 3, 2020

Q: Why does NCIL need separate rules for COVID-19?

A: In the current community situation, there is risk involved in any social gathering. To move forward with a baseball and softball league this summer, NCIL needs to try to provide as safe an environment as possible under the circumstances. While no set of rules or guidelines can remove all risk from participation, our intent is to reduce the risk of virus transmission for our players, volunteers, coaches, umpires, and spectators

Q: Who is responsible for enforcing the NCIL COVID-19 rules?

A: Enforcement of these rules is the responsibility of all league officials, coaches, assistant coaches, volunteers, and umpires. The cooperation of all NCIL participants, families, and spectators is fundamental to the success of our season under these unusual circumstances. Our failure to comply may cause the health department to implement additional rules on our league or force us to discontinue our season. We are all in this together.

Q: What happens if I choose not to follow the NCIL COVID-19 rules?

A: Failure to follow these rules may result in removal from the event or cancellation of practices, games, or other league events. Continued failure to follow these rules may result in suspension of privileges to attend events for the family and player.

A: Systemic failure to follow these rules may result in the health department implementing additional rules on our league or forcing us to discontinue our season.

Q: Why are there requirements for face coverings?

A: Face coverings reduce the risk of virus transmission.

A: The State of Ohio's guidelines for baseball and softball include recommended best practices regarding face coverings. NCIL has chosen to make those best practices mandatory.

A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of Ohio recommend that everyone should wear a "cloth face cover" when leaving their homes and going out in public. The face covering is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. According to the CDC, the cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing. Both are complementary methods to reduce virus transmission.

Q: Why do I need to do a self-assessment of myself and my player before attending an NCIL activity?

A: Performing a self-assessment is required by the State of Ohio's Responsible RestartOhio Operating Requirements as it helps reduce the risk to all participants and spectators of virus transmission at an NCIL activity.

Q: What if I have symptoms?

A: Anyone (participant or spectator) experiencing symptoms must remain away from the NCIL activity to reduce the risk to all participants and spectators of virus transmission. Anyone experiencing symptoms at any point during an NCIL activity shall immediately isolate and leave the NCIL activity.

Q: What if I find out I have COVID-19 after I have attended an NCIL activity?

A: All confirmed cases (tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19) of participants or spectators who have attended an NCIL activity must be reported to league officials to meet reporting requirements of the State of Ohio's Responsible RestartOhio Operating Requirements.

Q: Do players need to wash their hands during the game?

A: Hand washing (or hand sanitizing when soap and water are not available) is strongly recommended while attending NCIL activities. Participants and spectators are encouraged to bring hand sanitizer for personal use. NCIL is attempting to source hand sanitizer for participants and will update this FAQ as appropriate.

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Q: Why no high fives, home run celebrations or handshake lines?

A: The no-touch rule is in effect both to enforce social distance spacing and to reduce the risk of virus transmission. All participants shall refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with players, opposing players, coaches, umpires, and other spectators during all NCIL activities.

Q: How long will these rules be in place?

A: The NCIL COVID-19 rules will be enforced as long as the State, City or other governing body has requirements that restrict the normal activities of the league and community.

Q: Why no team snacks or team water?

A: NCIL is imposing a no-snack rule to support the intent of the State guidelines. The State's Responsible RestartOhio guidelines restrict the sharing of personal equipment or water. The guidelines prohibit the eating of seeds and gum. The intent is to reduce the risk of virus transmission by contact of shared items and to prevent the need to unnecessarily remove masks. Prohibiting team snacks and team water promotes the goals of the state guidelines.

Q: How will the dugouts be cleaned and sanitized?

A: NCIL will use a spray disinfectant to disinfect dugouts and player areas prior to play each day.

Q: Should my team wait before entering the dugout?

A: After a game or practice is complete, the next team should wait until the team from the previous game or practice has removed all equipment and trash and vacated the dugout and designated player areas.

Q: What is social distancing for a mound visit or player conference?

A: Coaches must remain six feet from players during all mound visits and player conferences, on and off the field of play. All coaches—base coaches, pitching coaches, bench coaches, etc.—must adhere to social distancing practices. Base coaches must always remain 6 feet away from base runners, batters, or other players. Players must always remain at least six feet away from other players. Exception: players actively playing and when the ball is in play.

Q: Why will the home plate umpire be positioned a short distance away from the catcher or positioned in the infield behind the pitcher?

A: The umpires will call the game from alternate positions to ensure social distancing requirements and umpire safety requirements can be met.

Q: How many kids can sit in the dugout?

A: The league will work with the City and the coaches to determine the appropriate number of people in the dugouts to allow for proper social distancing. Additional player areas adjacent to the dugouts will be designated to accommodate the additional space needed for team social distancing.

Q: Can my player share their equipment with a friend?

A: No. Sharing of personal equipment or water is not permitted. Belongings should be used only by the individual owner to reduce risk of virus transmission.

Q: Can my player use shared equipment provided by the league?

A: Yes. Players can use shared equipment provided by the league. The State's Responsible RestartOhio guidelines recommend if league provided equipment must be shared, proper sanitation should be administered between users. The league will provide cleaning materials to teams to facilitate this process.

Q – What if I need to talk to my player during the game?

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A: Any spectator or family member who might need or want to talk to a player during the game must remain six feet away from the field or any player area or else have the player come to them outside the player area. This will ensure that other players or participants do not come into contact with someone who is not wearing a mask.

A: Any spectator who enters any player area or comes within six feet of the backstop, sideline fencing, or out-of-play lines will be required to follow all of the rules that apply to adult participants, specifically including the requirement to wear a face covering at all times.

Q: Where should spectators sit during games or practices?

A: Spectators should sit away from the team areas and space themselves to allow for proper social distancing for most leagues. T-Ball and Machine Pitch leagues will require a parent or guardian to be available for players to sit with during breaks in practices or games. While each field offers different opportunities for spectator viewing, it would be best if spectators watched events along the outfield foul lines to allow teams as much additional space as possible.

Q: As a coach, why do my practices and events need to be scheduled through the league and appear in the SI Play system?

A: The State's guidelines require NCIL to maintain electronic records to be available for contact tracing if required. The SI Play system is the method the league will use to comply with this requirement.

A: NCIL will coordinate venue availability to minimize interactions between teams coming/going at the same field and using the same parking facilities at the same time.

Q: Where can I find additional info to support my player and the league?

Please refer to the websites noted below for additional information including.

1. Most current version of NCIL COVID-19 specific information.
 - <http://ncil.website.siplay.com>
2. State of Ohio Responsible RestartOhio Operating Requirements
 - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Responsible-Protocols/>
3. State of Ohio Baseball/Softball Guidelines
 - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Baseball-Softball.pdf>
4. CDC Considerations for Youth Sports
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
5. CDC Symptom Information
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>
6. CDC face-covering information.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>
7. City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Division Baseball/Softball Guidelines
 - <https://www.columbus.gov/RecParksCOVID19/>
 - <http://crpdsports.org/restartus>