

Softball Nova Scotia

Phase 2021: Return to Game Play

Guidelines.

These have been extraordinary times, given where we were three months ago. As a Softball community, we must be appreciative of the opportunity to get on the field this summer. It is absolutely everyone's responsibility to adhere to core public health guidelines. The rules and guidelines presented in this document must be adopted by all Softball groups in Nova Scotia in order to operate.

Associations, Softball teams are permitted to begin Game Play, training, practice and Competitions as of March 10th.

Softball participants and officials can gather in groups of up to 75 people without social distancing for games, practices, and **competitions within their regular competitive schedule. These guidelines have been put in place by Nova Scotia Public Health. There are no tournaments allowed outside of your regular competitive league schedule.**

The number 75 must include everyone on the field of play. This involves the players, coaches, trainers, officials ext.-everyone who would normally be needed if it were a regular practice, game, or competition. The 75-person maximum does not include facility or venue staff required to operate the game or performance safely.

Association Considerations

1. SNS guidelines are the minimum standard that must be met. Associations may implement any other precautionary measures they feel necessary to ensure the safety of participants.
2. It is expected that all associations will familiarize themselves and remain up to date with the relevant Public Health Guidelines issued by the Province.
3. These guidelines have been created in the context of a rapidly changing environment. It may be the case that new or modified Public Health directives are issued prior to the amendment of these guidelines. In the event of any conflict between these guidelines and any Public Health directive or recommendation, the Public Health directive or recommendation shall govern.
4. Phase 2 may be adjusted as public group sizes are permitted to increase.
5. Membership data must be provided to SNS prior to participants being permitted on the field.
6. Should the summer be interrupted due to COVID-19, SNS will not be issuing membership refunds. It is highly recommended associations develop their own refund policy.

7. All participants will be required to sign a **Release, Waiver of Liability, and Indemnity** acknowledging the inherent risk in participation, and the release of liability towards Softball Nova Scotia and the association. SNS will provide a form of waiver to its associations. Associations must have the signed waiver prior to allowing any athlete on the field. SNS reserves the right to audit associations to ensure they have collected the signed waiver.

8. Each Association/leagues and groups must communicate all guidelines to its members. Association/leagues and groups collect contact information for every member, so every association/league or teams is mandated to communicate these guidelines and any changes to them to its members and/or their parents/guardians.

9. Association/leagues and groups are required to work with facility owners to adopt Softball NS Return to Play plan. Association/leagues and groups will also be required to take all additional health precautions put in place by the facility owners.

10. Should a potential COVID-19 case within or connected to an association or member thereof become known, SNS reserves the right to require softball Association/leagues and groups to cease operations immediately. Softball Association/leagues and groups must abide by any order to cease operations until it is deemed safe to resume.

11. All Association/leagues and groups will cooperate and work with SNS in investigating any concerns or issues brought forward regarding adherence to these guidelines (on a case-by-case basis).

Environment

1. Indoor training is permissible if and only if groups follow the Provincial Public Health measures in place at the relevant time.

2. Dugouts- may be utilized by coaches/athletes, assuming physical distancing and all other Public Health measures can be observed.

3. Field bookings are to be made with a minimum of 15-minute grace times between bookings to allow for limited interaction between groups using the field.

4. Athletes must be encouraged to not enter the premises while other teams are still playing. If they do arrive while another game is in progress, they are required to remain in their vehicle or warm up in an area away from athletes, and fans attending the previous game.

5. Associations family members and/or all spectators will be required to maintain physical distancing.

6. Ridesharing is to be discouraged whenever possible unless it is within their bubble.

Equipment

1. No sharing of personal helmets, gloves, hats, or training devices.

2. No sharing of bats (unless cleaned with a certified disinfectant after every use).

3. No sharing of any other equipment unless disinfected between personal uses.

4. No sharing of catcher's gear. Catcher's gear can only be used if the following conditions are met:

- ❖ Catcher's personal gear.

- ❖ Personal used Catcher's gear should not be used unless it has been disinfected for at least 24 hours.

- ❖ 'Association gear' is used by one person per day and disinfected after each session

5. The following precautions are recommended to minimize the risks of multiple people handling the same Softballs:

- ❖ Athletes must be provided with the opportunity to sanitize their hands between drills/activities.

Personal Protective Precautions

1. All participants and/or their parents/guardians must conduct a self-assessment questionnaire to determine whether they are at risk of having Covid-19 or having come into contact with COVID -19 prior to attending any association event. A form of self-assessment questionnaire is attached to these guidelines. If the answer to any of the questions is "yes" then this must be reported to the association and the individual will not be permitted to participate in softball Association/leagues and groups events until such time as the individual completes a self-quarantine, receives a negative COVID-19 test or has been otherwise cleared by Public Health to leave quarantine (i.e. recovered and non-symptomatic after a positive case). The softball

association/league or teams **Must** provide the Softball NS office via email with this information immediately. Softball NS must be notified in writing once the an individual has received a negative test before resuming Softball activities.

2. All First Aid kits are to be updated to include PPE (as deemed appropriate by public health - <https://www.canada.ca/en/publichealth/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/preventionrisks.html?topic=ex-col-faq#p>) should physical contact may be necessary due to injury.

3. One designated person shall be present at any association event to address injuries in order to avoid physical contact between the injured person and multiple people.

4. Teams must have hand sanitizer available for use by participants, but athletes will be encouraged to bring their own sanitizer bottle for personal use.

Communication

1. Every softball Association/leagues and groups must communicate the self-assessment requirements, personal hygiene recommendations, and guidelines, together with any additional safety requirements, it puts in place to all athletes and their parents/guardians.

2. SNS has provided Participant Guideline document for communication.

Tracking and Reporting

1. Softball Association/leagues and groups must keep a participant registry or have the ability to trace names, dates, time, and contact info for training activities and other events. Should a COVID-19 case be reported, this will assist in tracing.

2. Associations must report potential cases of contact between their membership and COVID-19-positive individuals to Softball Nova Scotia immediately. Further activities must be suspended until confirmation of a negative test is provided.

3. Softball NS has the authority to randomly request to see all tracking documentation at the field.

Softball Game Play

1. Drills, practices, and activities must adhere to the guidelines in this document.
2. Activities must ensure physical distancing of 2 meters (6 feet)
3. Activities must not involve the sharing of equipment.
4. Activities where participants are physically distancing in one group of 75 or less, incidental contact, (where a participant comes into close contact, less than two meters, with another participant,), that is infrequent, brief, and cannot be avoided may occur.

Game Modifications

1. Dugouts can be used during gameplay for coaches and athletes' social distance must always be maintained. A mask must be worn at all times while in the dugouts. Personal gear is to remain outside of the dugout. Designated space inside or outside the field must be provided for participants and teams to distance themselves safely physically from each other.
2. Mask must be worn at all times unless physically involved in Softball activity. When an athlete, coach or umpire are not involved in physical activity they must wear a mask at all times.
3. Umpires will be position behind catcher. Umpires are required to stand when making their calls. If the Umpire and catcher must engage in conversation, they must socially distance themselves safely physically 6ft from each other.
4. Games -as one group enters the facility must allow distance for one group to leave. If there are multiple timeslots with multiple teams coming must allow distance for the outgoing team. If there are only two teams schedule with no incoming teams will not be affected.
3. **No** team 'huddles' pre, post, or during competition. Addressing the entire team must be done with 2 meters spacing between everyone.
4. Post-game handshakes are **not** permitted.
5. Each team is responsible for their own Softballs on defence. All games balls should remain the same.
8. All other Softball rules are in effect.

SOFTBALL NOVA SCOTIA

COVID-19 Participant Screening Questionnaire

To protect the health and safety of all participants, their families, and our volunteers, all participants (together with their parents/ guardians, as appropriate) must self-assess prior to participating in any association event. It is the responsibility of the association to ensure that participants answer the following questions prior to attending any association event.

1. Have you recently travelled outside of Nova Scotia or been in contact with someone who has travelled or been outside the Province? If yes, a participant is not permitted to attend association events for 14 days from the date of the return from out of Province.

2. Have you been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days? If yes, a participant is not permitted to any association events for 14 days from the date the participant last had contact with the COVID-19 positive individual.

3. Are you currently experiencing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms?

- A fever (or chills/sweats)
- New cough (or one that is getting worse)
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Hoarse voice
- Diarrhea
- Unusual fatigue
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Red, purple or blueish lesions, on the feet, toes, or fingers without a clear cause

If yes, the participant is not permitted to attend association events until symptoms have

disappeared or a negative COVID-19 test is provided.