



2020 NSAA Fall Season Guidelines

Circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic are constantly changing and the circumstances vary from community to community. Difficult decisions will have to be made from week to week or even day to day. The safety and well-being of the participants and spectators is and always will be the primary consideration as we provide opportunities to participate in the fall sports season.

Each school has the authority to determine if it will participate in the 2020 Fall Season. During the season it will be the responsibility of the host school to provide administrative oversight in compliance with established COVID-19 guidelines in accordance with their local health departments and facilities. **Prior to any contest, the host school administration will be required to notify the visiting school administration of their established protocols.** The visiting team and spectators will be expected to adhere to all protocols established by the host school.

The host school should make every effort to mitigate risk and provide adequate opportunities for physical distancing procedures for the opposing team, officials, and all spectators.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Restricting attendance / seating areas
- Separate points of entry for home and visitor teams / spectators
- No concession stands or separate/multiple concession stands for home and visitor spectators
- Separate / multiple restrooms for home and visitor spectators
- Adequate locker room space / outdoor space for the opposing team
- Adequate locker room space / outdoor space for the officials
- Encouraging / requiring spectators to wear face coverings
- Implementing diligent and effective cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched objects and surfaces

If a school has a player test positive for COVID-19, they will contact their County Health Department regarding a course of action.

It is recommended that players, coaches, and spectators have their temperatures checked at home or at the school prior to participating in or attending practices and games. Any individual with a temperature of 100.4 or above should not participate in or attend practices or games.

During practice, coaches should make accommodations for physical distancing whenever possible. Provide adequate spacing when participating in stretching, instructional time and drills. Conduct workouts in small groups whenever possible.

During competition, the sideline/bench/team areas should be restricted to essential personnel only. This includes players, coaches, team trainers, team managers, game officials, statisticians, and media.

Coaches, officials, and players should be cognizant of physical distancing guidelines when interacting during the game.

Pregame and postgame interactions between opposing coaches and players should adhere to physical distancing guidelines.

Schools are encouraged to play their regularly scheduled competitions unless a COVID-19 issue prevents them from playing. Member schools shall be solely responsible for determining whether a scheduled game, match, contest, or other activity is cancelled or postponed due to a COVID-19 related issue in consultation with their local health departments. Member schools shall notify the NSAA of any cancellation or postponement.



2020 NSAA Softball COVID-19 Rules Modifications & Considerations

- All NSAA member schools must follow their local [Directed Health Measures](#).
- Schools that are in Phase 3 must follow the [DHHS Sports Reopening Guidelines](#) and it is recommended that schools in Phase 4 do the same to create continuity and consistency.
- The host administration must pre-communicate local protocols and activity requirements to participating school(s).

NSAA Approved Rulings:

Schedules

1. The deadline to submit varsity schedules to the NSAA has been extended to August 20th.
2. Regular season games that are canceled due to COVID-19 will be considered a “no-contest.”
 - a. Wild card points will not be awarded for “no-contest” games.
 - b. Forfeits will not be issued for “no-contest” games.
3. Replacement games (not originally scheduled) may be scheduled at any time.
 - a. Wild card points will not be awarded.
 - b. Contest limitations may not be exceeded.

NFHS Softball Rules Modifications:

Face Shields (1-7-1, 1-8-4) - Per guidance from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, plastic shields covering the entire face (**unless integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet and clear without the presence of any tint**) shall not be allowed during contests. Their use during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or to teammates.

Facial Coverings/Additional Equipment (1-8): Cloth facial coverings are recommended but not required. Facial coverings must be of one color, not distracting and have no designs. Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow cloth facial coverings.

Pregame Conference (2-14-2): Limit attendees to one coach from each team plus the umpires. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter’s box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person.

Substitutions: (3-3-3): The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.

Foul Balls/Coaching (3-5-1 NOTE): Umpires do not handle equipment on the field during play.

Contact with the game balls should be as limited as possible. During competition, foul balls should be retrieved by personnel from the defensive team. Simultaneously a new ball should be thrown into game play from the defensive team's dugout.

Coaching (3-5-3, 3-6-14): Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from the umpire.

Coaching (3-5-2): Base coaches must stay 6 feet from a runner at all times after suspension of play.

Bench and Field Conduct (3-6-6): Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players when scoring or after home runs. The number of individuals in the dugout is dependent on the size of dugout. Players and coaches should maintain 6 feet of social distance. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm-up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing. The dugout extension should be outside of the field.

Charged Conferences (3-7-1, 3-7-2, 3-7-3): Coaches holding defensive conferences must stay on the home plate side of the pitcher's circle, and the player or players must be on the opposite side of the pitcher's circle maintaining 6 feet of distance. No more than two players plus the pitcher are allowed. Only one coach is permitted during the conference. If a coach visits the pitcher, all other players should stay outside the pitching circle.

Exchange of Lineup Cards (4-2-1b): Lineups should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup. It is recommended that lineup cards be exchanged team to team and teams to scorekeeper to be shared via photo or text.

Infractions by the Pitcher (6-2-2): Pitchers are not allowed to put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a "no pitch." Any umpire is permitted to make this call. The ball should be called dead immediately and it will be a "no pitch." The ball should be put in the dugout for cleaning, and the pitcher should sanitize hands before play continues.

Plate Umpire (10-2-1): The plate umpire should stand deeper than normal to call balls and strikes.

Equipment and Apparel (10-4-2): Cloth facial coverings are recommended but not required. The masks must be of one color, not distracting and have no designs. The umpire may wear disposable gloves and masks.

Softball Umpires Manual Modifications

Mechanics Sections 3, 4b and c: Base umpires should maintain 6 feet of distance from any player as a starting position when rotated and/or counter-rotated.

Section 2E: The catcher and batter should be 6 feet apart when the umpire is dusting off the plate.

Considerations for Umpires:

1. Consider facility size and spacing within umpire dressing rooms. They should be cleaned and sanitized.
2. If umpires must enter the field through the dugout, the dugout should be empty with no players/coaches/team personnel.

Further Softball Considerations:

1. Players should use their own equipment (e.g. gloves, helmets and bats) as much as possible.
2. Offensive helmets do not need to match.
3. Postgame shaking of hands is suspended.
4. Limit the number of non-essential personnel who are in the press box throughout games.
5. Coaches are responsible for ensuring social/physical distancing is maintained between players as much