



Stittsville Minor Softball Association (SMSA)

Return to Play Protocols and COVID-19 Guidelines

Updated July 1, 2021

Approved July 1, 2021

**Version 2 updates noted in blue*



Please note, the information contained in this document is subject to change at any time based on new or updated information provided by Ottawa Public Health and the Government of Ontario.

SMSA Plans for 2021

- To hold developmental training sessions and games dependent on the guidelines set out by the Ontario government and Ottawa Public Health.
- Small 3-4 team bubbles will be formed from teams within the SMSA association based on age levels.
 - Games will be played within these bubbles for the season once games are allowed.
 - Local mass gathering allowances will be followed for each session.
- For all age groups we will only permit competition / training sessions when approved by the Ontario government and Ottawa Public Health, and if we can adhere to local mass gathering allowances.

General Protocols

- **Fields**
 - Step 1 of reopening: softball diamonds will be divided in halves – 2 groups of 10.
 - [Step 2 of reopening: no field divisions necessary.](#)
- **PPE**
 - Each team will be provided by SMSA with the following PPE items:
 - Disinfecting / sanitizing wipes
 - Hand sanitizer (to be kept on the bench)
 - First Aid / Trainers kit with extra PPE items such as:
 - Extra disposable face masks
 - Disposable gloves
 - Face shield
 - Hand sanitizer



- **Safety Officer Representative**
 - Each team will designate one or more person(s) to be a Safety Officer Representative to assist on and off the field for each session.

- **Screening / Diagnosed with COVID-19 / Return from COVID-19**
 - **Screening**
 - The following individuals will not be permitted to participate in any sessions:
 - Anyone who has recently returned from traveling outside of Canada, in the past 14 days.
 - Anyone who has knowingly been exposed to or been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, in the past 14 days.
 - Anyone who is sick or has any COVID-19 symptoms.

 - Players, Coaches and Spectators Pre-Screening / Contact Information:
 - Pre-screening through an SMSA provided COVID-19 assessment form link is required by all participants, volunteers and spectators on the day of the session prior to attending any game or training session. Any individual shall not attend if they fail the screening protocol.
 - The contact information (name, email or phone number) for all players, coaches and spectators in attendance for each game or training session will be recorded and retained for a minimum of 31 days after the activity in case it is required for contact tracing in relation to an actual or potential case of COVID-19 being detected.
 - **Diagnosed with COVID-19**
 - Any participant, volunteer or spectator diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has been in contact with any person having COVID-19 in the previous 14 days MUST not attend any game, training session, meeting or other in-person team activity and MUST notify their local public health authority.
 - **Return to play from COVID-19**
 - COVID 19 positive cases, can only return to play / train / participate after:
 - A doctor's note or negative COVID-19 test result is provided and received by the SMSA Covid Safety Officer, or



- Ottawa Public Health has advised that the individual is considered recovered per Ontario/Ottawa Public Health guidelines and cleared to return to play/work.

- **Mass Gathering Limitations**
 - Step 1 of Reopening - 10 Participants Mass Gathering Allowance
 - No full teams – training sessions only.
 - 10 athletes plus coaches.
 - Coaches will be limited to ensure physical distancing and avoid overcrowding on the fields.
 - [Step 2 of Reopening - No limits on participants](#)

- **Equipment**
 - **Bats**
 - The most desirable scenario is that there will be no sharing of bats. If bats are to be shared between players, they must be sanitized by a coach / bench adult before each player uses it.
 - **Player Equipment**
 - Each player must have their own glove, helmet and softball fielders mask / shield.
 - Personal batting gloves are permitted. They are not to be shared with any other players.
 - The most desirable scenario is that there will be no sharing of back catching equipment. If back catching equipment is to be shared between players, it must be sanitized by a coach / bench adult before each player uses it.
 - Players are strongly encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer.
 - Sharing of water bottles is not allowed.
 - Players are to keep their equipment in their own designated area for each session.

 - **Balls**
 - Balls should be sanitized frequently throughout the training session and all balls are to be sanitized after the training session is finished.



- **Face Masks**

- Coaches in the field of play must wear non-medical face masks or face coverings when they approach a player, other coach or umpire. Coaches are encouraged to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings in other situations.
- If the catcher and umpire are observing the 3 metres physical distancing requirement then they are not required to wear a face mask or covering.
- It is strongly suggested that any offensive player who reaches base safely should wear a face mask or covering (a bandana or buff will suffice).
- It is recommended that all individuals wear a mask within the outdoor field, other than when participating in the session. Exceptions to this would be individuals who provide a medical note or if the local public health unit provides specific direction that they do not recommend the use of face masks / coverings.

- **Spectators**

- **Spectator Allowance**

- Up to a **MAXIMUM of 3 spectators per participant** will be allowed to attend each session.
 - Team staff are *not* included in this 3 spectator per participant limit.
- All spectators must adhere to the **3 metres** physical distancing requirement for anyone outside of their immediate family that they are residing with.
- All spectators are to sit together with all members of their household in their own selected area which must be a minimum of **3 metres** distance from the players designated bench area AND a minimum of **3 metres** distance from all other spectators.
- Spectators / participants will be asked to leave small children / pets at home if at all possible, to reduce the number of individuals present at a game or event.
 - If they are present, they must be supervised at ALL times by a parent / guardian and must be kept away from the designated player bench area.
- We recommend that spectators wear a facemask when arriving and departing the field, and at any time during the session when they are unable to adhere to the **3 metre** physical distancing requirement.

- **Screening**

- The following individuals will not be permitted to attend any sessions:



- Anyone who has recently returned from traveling outside of Canada, in the past 14 days.
- Anyone who has knowingly been exposed to or been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, in the past 14 days.
- Anyone who is sick or has any COVID-19 symptoms.
- Pre-screening through an SMSA provided COVID-19 assessment form link is required by all participants, volunteers and spectators on the day of the session prior to attending any game or training session. Any individual shall not attend if they fail the screening protocol.
 - **ALL spectators (MAXIMUM of 3 spectators per participant) MUST be listed on the participants submitted daily pre-screening form.**
- **Seating**
 - All spectators must adhere to the 3 metres physical distancing requirement for anyone outside of their immediate family that they are residing with.
 - All spectators will be required to sit a minimum of 3 metres away from the designated player bench area.
- **Pets / Minor Children**
 - Spectators / participants will be asked to leave small children / pets at home if at all possible, to reduce the number of individuals present at a game or event. If they are present, they must be supervised at all times by a parent / guardian.
- **Injured Player**
 - If medical personnel are on hand, injured players should be dealt with primarily by these individuals, unless further assistance is requested.
 - The number of individuals attending to an injured player should be limited to the number necessary based on the severity of the injury.
 - Players injured during the game must be positioned in a safe area or at the other end of the dugout. Younger ages - the parent will need to remove the child from the field and place them in a safe place respecting the physical distancing rules.



- **Reporting of Suspected COVID-19 Cases**

- Participants (personnel, players, coaches, managers, spectators, etc.) who become ill with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while playing/on-site will be isolated and removed from the activity.
 - The activity/event will be shut down while:
 - Equipment (dugouts/bases) are cleaned and sanitized.
 - Participants sanitize their hands.
 - The Coach or Sanitation and Safety Officer Volunteer will advise the unwell participant to don a face covering or mask (if available) on their exit from the field.
 - If leaving the field can not be done immediately (waiting for a private vehicle, or a parent/guardian), the participant will remain in the designated isolation area.
 - The medic/personnel attending symptomatic persons should wear masks, rubber/disposable gloves, and glasses or visors, which shall be disposed of immediately after use and the staff shall cleanse thoroughly afterwards.
 - The symptomatic patient should be given a surgical mask before carrying out a careful evaluation.
 - Medic/staff must proceed, immediately after evaluation, with personal and area cleaning protocol.
 - If the subject does not fall within the definition of “case” or “suspect case”, they shall be sent home with the indication to contact his/her own physician.
 - If a medic/personnel member falls within the definition of “case” or “suspect case”, it shall be reported immediately to local health authorities following the pre-established organizational channels.
- SMSA will maintain an attendance listing record and advise participants if they have been in contact with a member who has tested positive for Covid 19 and to contact Ottawa Public Health (1-888-999-6488), their health care provider or visit their Local Health Department Website to determine if further care is needed and learn about assessment centres.

Note: The privacy of SMSA members will be maintained; participants who may have been in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case will only be advised that someone at the training session / game / tournament has tested positive.



Training Sessions

- Follow all capacity limits according to local and Provincial guidelines.
- Maintain a minimum of 3 metres distance during physical activity, including warm ups, pre-game and post-game activities, wherever possible.

Games (In Step 2 of Reopening)

- **General Guidelines**
 - Follow all capacity limits according to local and Provincial guidelines.
 - Maintain a minimum of 3 metres distance during physical activity, including warm ups, pre-game and post-game activities, wherever possible.
 - Fields will have designated “Home” and “Away” benches in order to provide safe travel areas to reduce contact between individuals entering and exiting the park.
 - All teams will be designated as “Home” or “Away” prior to the start of each game.
 - The home team will be responsible for setting up the diamond.
 - No handshakes, team huddles, high fives, etc. allowed. Suggest a new show of respect for the opposition at a safe distance.
 - No sunflower seeds, gum, etc. anywhere on or off the field in the vicinity of the field.
 - No shared team snacks are to be handed out after the session.
 - Protests are to be held at a safe distance. Any player / coach / umpire getting heated and yelling will be removed from the venue.
 - There is to be no contact with coaches at 1st & 3rd, after hits or home runs or reaching base, etc.
- **Scorekeeping**
 - Will be the home team's responsibility.
 - The away teams roster can be provided to the home team via email prior to the start of the game.
 - A picture of the final game sheet will be emailed to the away team after the conclusion of the game.



- **Balls**
 - The defensive team will manage their own balls while in the field to reduce contact with individuals on the opposing team. No one on the offensive team is to retrieve or touch the ball.
 - Additional official game balls are to be supplied by each team for each game.
 - Balls will require frequent sanitization by each team during and after the game.
 - Umpires will not handle the balls at all.

- **Bats**
 - Picking up the hitter's bat will be the responsibility of the bench coach and must be cleaned after each use.
 - In the event there is a bat near home plate that poses a danger for the players during game play the umpire will kick it out of the way.

- **Batter / Bench Area**
 - Sanitizer on benches to allow for frequent hand washing (between innings / after at bats).
 - If the dugouts / benches are not large enough to allow for 3 metres physical distance between all players and coaches, then the "bench" will be extended along the baseline / outfield fence / behind the dugout. Recommend having each player bring their own lawn / folding chair.
 - No eating on the bench.
 - Batters / base runners should attempt to reduce any unnecessary contact with other players. They should also avoid using their hands to contact the ball at any time.
 - Batters / base runners are to wear a face mask while at bat and running the bases.
 - Batters / base runners are to take any "breathing breaks" they feel are necessary throughout the game. Please ensure you are able to be physically distanced when taking any "breathing breaks".

- **Pitcher**
 - Pitchers are not to lick their fingers and are to provide their own rosin bag.
 - Defensive conferences at the pitcher's circle are to be limited to one person who must remain outside the circle.
 - Mound visits with catcher / coach both must remain outside the circle.



Multiple Daily Games / Training Sessions

- Scheduling of diamonds will allow for a sufficient amount of time between the conclusion of the prior event and the start of the subsequent event to allow for: (1) the team(s) involved in the prior event to clean/sanitize equipment, dispose of garbage from common areas, and have all team members vacate the field BEFORE (2) the team(s) involved in the subsequent event enter the field and clean/sanitize common areas; without crossover between the teams participating in the two events. In the case of games, this may require SMSA to establish appropriate "drop dead" or "no new inning" rules to allow for safe crossover between events. Participants, volunteers and spectators for a subsequent event shall remain in their motor vehicle in the parking lot until participants, volunteers and spectators from the prior event have returned to their motor vehicles.
 - For games, both the home team and the visiting team are responsible for cleaning/sanitizing their own dugout/bench before and after games.
 - Note: Players, Coaches, and Spectators must vacate the field immediately after the allotted training session or game time to assist with maintaining the allocated times and allow team staff sufficient time to prepare for the next session and transitional period.



Umpire RTP Protocols

- **Pre-Screening**
 - Pre-screening forms must be filled out **ON THE DAY OF THE GAME** via the link provided by SMSA for **EVERY** game **PRIOR** to arriving at the field.

- **Equipment**
 - Umpires will not touch any equipment that is not theirs. This includes game balls and bats.
 - If a bat is in the way of the 3rd base runner and there is a safety risk, the umpire can kick the bat out of the way.

- **Masks**
 - Plate umpires are to wear a mask at all times.
 - Umpires are to take any “breathing breaks” they feel are necessary throughout the game.
 - The base umpire is to have a mask on their person at all times and are required to put it on anytime they are unable to distance themselves 3 metres away from any other person.

- **At the Field**
 - Maintain at least 3 meters from coaches & players whenever possible.
 - If not possible, a face mask is to be worn.
 - For all pregame, and coach/umpire meetings, all people must maintain 3 meters of separation or masks must be worn.
 - Umpire to umpire conferences should only be used if required. (Face covering is required if closer than 3 metres.)
 - A small area behind the backstop, or further behind the ball field as desired, will be designated as the Umpire area for placing your personal belongings.
 - Please keep your provided SMSA Umpire PPE Kit in your bag and with you at all games.

Once you have read the entire Return to Play Protocol document, please complete the following [Return to Play agreement](#).