

GRYBA 2020

SAFETY GUIDELINES REGARDING COVID-19

As the summer months are quickly approaching, we recognize that there is still a lot of uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. Governor Walz has issued various stay at home orders which give us hope that perhaps we will be able to enjoy some version of summer before fall hits. With that in mind, the Grand Rapids Youth Baseball Association has created a set of guidelines for our local decision makers with information about how we intend to alter our youth baseball season.

Being mindful of public health, social distancing and mental well-being, we will follow the CDC and MDH protocols as well. Our goal is to enable a safe, structured atmosphere for some organized activity to our youth baseball players as we begin to move forward in safely adjusting the dials in Minnesota.

The safety guidelines below are proposed additional measures to be taken before, during, and after a youth baseball practice or game.

PHASED APPROACH FOR RETURN TO PLAY

Phase 1: Practices only

As of May 18th, 2020, groups of 10 per field will be allowed at Gunn Park. All participants will need to follow appropriate physical distancing. Baseball is an outdoor sport with our participants occupying natural positions that are greater than social distancing standards in the field.

*Covid-19 Waiver must be signed by legal guardian prior to the player coming to practice.

*One adult per child will be allowed at the practice facility. Parents are strongly encouraged to stay at the field (in their vehicles or socially distanced) in case there is inclement weather.

*Youth baseball teams can begin practicing with coaches monitoring and enforcing social distancing guidelines.

*Concession building bathrooms are restricted to players/coaches only. Social distancing rules apply: one person allowed in the bathroom at a time.

*Outfield bathroom will be open for spectators. Social distancing rules apply: one person allowed in the bathroom at a time.

*If there is inclement weather (lightning within 10 miles of the area) all practices will be canceled. There will be no 15 minute waiting rule. Players will immediately be directed to their vehicles.

*There will be no shared use of gloves or water bottles.

*Batting gloves are encouraged.

*Refrain from sharing equipment in general.

*No sunflower seeds or gum allowed.

*All spitting of any kind is discouraged.

*Catchers gear will be properly disinfected after each player's use. One catcher per game is preferred.

*Bats will be disinfected after each player's use.

*Baseballs will be disinfected often.

*Concrete dugouts will be off limits.

CDC approved face masks are recommended for everyone attending and playing.

Phase 2: Games played

When the cap on the number of people at gatherings rises to 50, we would be able to resume game play. Vulnerable populations should continue to follow stay at home guidelines. Spectators will remain behind the outfield fencing to watch games, adhering to social distancing guidelines.

*Concessions will be provided by text order and delivery to designated locations.

*Concession building bathrooms are restricted to players/coaches only. Social distancing rules apply: one person allowed in the bathroom at a time.

*Outfield bathroom will be open for spectators. Social distancing rules apply: one person allowed in the bathroom at a time.

*If there is inclement weather (lightning within 10 miles of the area) all games will be canceled. There will be no 15 minute waiting rule. Players will immediately be directed to their vehicles.

Entering and exiting parks: Gunn Park has spacious parking and walkway availability. No tailgating allowed before/after the game. Spectators will be allowed to watch the game from their vehicle as long as they are following social distancing guidelines. All vehicles must remain on gravel/tar parking lots.

We will follow state guidelines for social distancing by:

Social Distancing:

Parents and spectators have separate seating away from the backstop and dugout. Spectators will not be allowed around the area of the backstop or dugouts. Only players, coaches, and umpires are allowed on the field of play and in the immediate “player only” area. Spectators are only permitted to view the game from the outfield.

* Using physical barriers to block off “player/coach/umpire” only beyond this point.

* Using “enter/exit” signs inside the playing fields.

* Designating appropriate “dugout space” per social distancing guidelines.

* Using PPE for concession stand workers.

* Offer “text order” concession service to spectators not allowed inside the “player only” fence.

*Players scheduled for the 2nd game of the night will not be permitted to the playing area until the first teams have exited. Coaches can use alternative area around Gunn Park to get their team ready. Outfield gates will be open at the end of each game to allow 2nd game players to enter and 1st game players to exit on the walking paths.

Dugout (team personnel): The dugout will be extended behind the dugout from the side of the backstop and down the 1st/3rd base foul lines

behind the field fencing. This is to allow rostered players and coaches to practice social distancing throughout the game while their team is up to bat.

*Hand and equipment sanitizing between innings will be enforced.

*Social distancing guidelines inside the cement dugout will be enforced at all times.

Game protocol: At the pregame meeting and throughout the game, coaches and umpires will not be allowed to shake hands or have any physical contact with each other. All parties must maintain social distancing guidelines. No physical contact (horseplay) is permitted.

*Players and coaches are asked to refrain from high fives or any celebratory contact.

*At the conclusion of the game, players will be asked to forego the customary sportsmanship handshakes. Instead, each team will line up on their respective foul lines (socially distanced) and “tip their cap” to the opposing team and to the outfield spectators.

*Players scheduled for the 2nd game of the night will not be permitted to the playing area until the first teams have exited. Coaches can use alternative area around Gunn Park to get their team ready. Outfield gates will be open at the end of each game to allow 2nd game players to enter and 1st game players to exit on the walking paths.

Tournaments: As of May 18, 2020, in order to limit the amount of travel required, all “out of town” tournaments will be cancelled. This includes hosting out of town teams at Gunn Park. Tournaments for “in house” teams will be considered as long as the guidelines in this document are followed. If conditions are relaxed per Governor Walz’ executive orders, GRYBA will consider sponsoring travelling baseball for our league.

Equipment: GRYBA will provide team coaches with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. All equipment will be disinfected before, during (at the 1/2 inning change), and after games.

*Batting gloves are encouraged.

*Refrain from sharing equipment in general.

*Each team will provide their own baseballs when they are in the field.

- *Each team is responsible for sanitizing used balls each inning.
- *No sunflower seeds allowed.
- *All spitting of any kind is discouraged.
- *Catchers gear will be properly disinfected after each player's use. One catcher per game is preferred.

CDC approved face masks are recommended for everyone attending and playing.

Umpires: Umpires will be asked to officiate the game from behind the pitcher's mound, while practicing social distancing from all fielders.

Umpires are encouraged to wear a CDC approved facemask. Umpires should not handle baseballs.

Phase 3: All practices, games and tournaments

There are no limits on group sizes. Sporting events go back to normal participation and operation. CDC and MDH regulations will still be monitored and followed.

Authors:

The 2020 GRYBA Board has carefully considered CDC and MDH guidelines in the development of this plan. We ask that local county and city park officials to consider this plan, offer any feedback that would hinder this plan from moving forward.

In collaboration and agreement with local county and city park officials, we hope to provide a safe recreational activity for our area youth.

Please contact one of these 2020 GRYBA board members if more information is requested.

President: Mark Stupar 218-259-0597

Vice President: Jack Soltis 218-398-7373

Secretary: Krista Sjostrand 218-259-4756

Resources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>