

EDINA FASTPITCH 2020 BACK TO THE DIAMOND GUIDELINES

Prepared for City of Edina Recreation Department
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2020 Back to the Diamond COVID-19 Proposed Safety Guidelines

Subject to change

The coronavirus pandemic is first and foremost a human tragedy, affecting hundreds of thousands of people. It is also having a growing impact on the child and parent activities as well as the youth baseball and softball industry, our employees, and the dedicated umpires who officiate games. The guidelines below are intended to provide legislators and decision-makers with information about how we intend to alter youth baseball and softball in a joint effort to loosen restrictions while implementing strict, safe, and healthy social distancing guidelines. Being mindful of the factors of public health, social distancing, and societal well-being will allow thousands of youth baseball and softball players the opportunity to establish some semblance of normalcy as we continue to move forward in safely adjusting the dials in Minnesota.

The safety guidelines listed below are proposed additional measures to be taken before, during, and after youth baseball and softball practice and games. All other key prevention strategies by the CDC and Minnesota Department of Health will be strictly followed, in order to promote safe and healthy social distancing.

All Edina administrators, coaches, and participants in EGFA events should be aware of the coronavirus risk and take the necessary precautions to avoid exposure to germs. This includes maintaining good hygienic practices. We strongly recommend the following:

- Wash your hands often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol; this is suggested after any physical contact with another person or with a shared surface.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose – with a tissue, if possible or with an elbow, NOT A HAND – when coughing or sneezing, then properly discard the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid close contact with anyone else who is coughing or sneezing or who is otherwise sick.
- Clean or disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Wear a face mask when not on the field as a player and all the time as coaches, families, and umpires.
- If you feel sick AT ALL do not attend practices or games.

- **No sunflower seeds allowed at practice or games!**

All parents, guardians, coaches, team managers, game-changer app managers, and family members that attend games will be required to sign the waiver(s)

1. Adult Waiver
2. Participant Waiver

Advice from the CDC

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has a specific Q&A regarding the virus in children:

Q: Are children more susceptible to the virus that causes COVID-19 compared with the general population and how can infection be prevented?

A: No, there is no evidence that children are more susceptible... – see here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>

PHASED APPROACH FOR RETURN TO PLAY

PHASE I

Groups of 10 will need to follow appropriate physical distancing. Softball is an outdoor sport with our participants occupying natural positions that are greater than social distancing standards.

This will allow for youth softball teams to start practicing.

PHASE II

The cap on the number of people at gatherings rises to 50, which would be enough for games, likely without fans. Vulnerable populations should continue to follow stay home guidance.

This will allow for softball teams to begin conducting games.

PHASE III

There are no limits on group sizes. The sports go back to normal participation and operation.

PLEASE NOTE! EGFA is TAKING THIS EXTRA STEP and ENCOURAGING Vulnerable populations to stay away for the year. Take the year off and follow on GAME CHANGERS!! We will go the extra mile for each team to be entertaining for our fans who need to follow on the internet.

Practice Planning as below:

PRACTICE STARTS IN PHASE I EDINA - LOCAL RULES

Social Distancing:

PRACTICE TIME: Parents and spectators have separate seating away from the backstop or dugout. Spectators will not be allowed around the area of the backstop or dugouts. Only players, up to three coaches per team are allowed on the field of play. Spectators are only permitted to view the practice from the outfield fence. This means the practice may be viewed along the foul lines starting at the 1st/3rd base extending to the outfield and in the outfield fence area.

Entering or Exiting Parks:

Observe state guidelines for social distancing. Since there is only one entrance to the park(s), teams will need to be cautious and courteous at the point of entry, observing all social distancing rules.

Guidelines:

Encourage parents to supply their players with antibacterial wipes for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings/drills. The only shared equipment should be softballs and catcher's gear.

Association will subsidize coaches supplying hand sanitizer in dugouts so kids can clean hands in between innings and after at-bats

Allow players to wear PPE items if they choose, as long as the items do not compromise the safety of any and all participants in the practice.

Require teams to clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each practice, and to wipe down (clean) hard surfaces such as benches, bat racks, etc.

Upon arriving at a dugout for the first time, teams are to disinfect hard surface areas (benches, bat racks, etc.). Procedures above will comply with the CDC recommendation of a two-step process for cleaning and disinfecting.

Proposed Practice Spectator Options:

1. Any Parent/Guardian is permitted/allowed to spectate the practice in the designated area as described above. Social distancing guidelines would apply (for example, must be 6 feet from the next spectator).
2. Only immediate families/households of the players will be allowed to spectate the practice (for example, they must be 6 feet from the next spectator).

Dugout (Team Personnel):

The dugout will be extended to behind the dugout to the backstop for both teams. No more than 3-5 individuals are permitted in the dugout at any given time (this is dependent on the size of the dugout). These individuals (players, coaches, or any combination) must maintain all social distancing guidelines throughout the practice. All other team personnel must practice social distancing in the extended area of the dugout, as referenced above.

In dugouts, discontinue the use of water coolers that are provided by tournaments, parks, or teams. Players should bring their own personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players should plan on bringing an individual water bottle.

Equipment:

It is highly recommended that team personnel carry hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes with you to be used before, during, and after the practice, whenever appropriate, such as if/when you come into contact with the ball or any other players, coaches, or shared equipment (bases).

Please wear your batting gloves as much as possible, especially when handling a bat.

NO sharing equipment is permitted. This includes but is not limited to bats, helmets, and gloves.

Game Planning as below:**GAMES PLAYED IN PHASE II****Entering or Exiting Parks:**

If possible, all players, coaches, and umpires will enter through one entrance and exit through another, observing state guidelines for social distancing. This scenario replicates the path of travel through grocery stores.

Guidelines:

Encourage parents to supply their players with antibacterial wipes for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings/quarters/periods.

Association will subsidize coaches supplying hand sanitizer in dugouts so kids can clean hands in between innings and after at-bats

Allow players to wear PPE items if they choose, as long as the items do not compromise the safety of any and all participants in the game.

Require teams to clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each game, and to wipe down (clean) hard surfaces such as benches, bat racks, etc.

Upon arriving at a dugout for the first time, teams are to disinfect hard surface areas (benches, bat racks, etc.).

Social Distancing:

Parents and spectators have separate seating away from the backstop or dugout. Spectators will not be allowed around the area of the backstop or dugouts. Only players, up to three coaches per team, and the umpire(s) are allowed on the field of play. Spectators are only permitted to view the game from the outfield. This means the game may be viewed along the foul lines starting at the 1st/3rd base extending to the outfield and in the outfield area.

Proposed Spectator Options:

1. Any Parent/Guardian is permitted/allowed to spectate the game in the designated area as described above. Social distancing guidelines would apply (for example, must be 6 feet from the next group/spectator).
2. Only immediate families/households of the players will be allowed to spectate the game (for example, they must be 6 feet from the next group/spectator).

Dugout (Team Personnel):

The dugout will be extended to behind the dugout to the backstop for both teams. This is to allow rostered players and up to *three coaches* per team to practice social distancing throughout the game while their team is up to bat. Hand and equipment sanitizing between innings are recommended. No more than 3-5 individuals are permitted in the dugout at any given time (this is dependent on the size of the dugout). These individuals (players, coaches, or any combination) must maintain all social distancing guidelines throughout the game. All other team personnel must practice social distancing in the extended area of the dugout, as referenced above.

In dugouts, discontinue the use of water coolers that are provided by tournaments, parks, or teams. Players should bring their own, personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players should plan on bringing an individual water bottle.

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 or touching is permitted.

Players and coaches are asked to refrain from high fives or any other physical gestures of celebration. All team personnel must always maintain social distancing guidelines. At the conclusion of the game, players will be asked to forego the sportsmanship line at the end of the game. Instead, we are asking for each team to line up on their respective foul line and "tip their cap" as a salute to the other team to promote sportsmanship.

Equipment:

It is highly recommended that team personnel carry hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes with you to be used before, during, and after the games, whenever appropriate, such as if/when you come into contact with the ball or any other players, coaches, or shared equipment (bases). Please wear your batting gloves as much as possible, especially when handling a bat. Refrain from sharing equipment in general. This includes but is not limited to bats, helmets, and catcher's equipment. *(continued on next page)* **A collaboration of statewide community-based baseball and softball organizations**

Each team needs to provide their own softballs for when they are in the field. Each team is responsible for switching out their softballs each inning or sanitizing their baseballs/softballs as best as possible. Again, hand and equipment sanitizing between innings are recommended. CDC approved face masks are recommended for everyone attending and playing. This includes spectators, players, coaches, umpires, and field crews.

Umpires:

Umpires will be asked to officiate the game from behind the pitcher's mound while practicing social distancing with all fielders. This will limit the number of people around home plate and will still allow the umpire to call the game and see the whole field. Umpires should wear a CDC approved facemask. Umpires should *not* handle baseballs/softballs and should wear gloves if they intend to handle softballs. Change gloves after each use when handling softballs.

Concessions

No Concessions this year.

Restrooms

Public restrooms will be provided in Edina, not sure on other communities.

Universal Precautions and Personal Protective Equipment

It will be recommended that every player, coach, umpire, and fan carry their own bottle of hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes.

In addition, each team will have soap and sanitizer available for use on equipment and for players and coaches who are in need.

All players, coaches, and umpires will be asked to wash (with soap) and or sanitize hands prior to practice or the game, throughout the game as needed, and post the practice or game.

Only balls will be shared. Catcher gear will be wiped down and sanitized between games. There will be assigned catchers for games.

Gum, sunflower seeds, peanuts, and chewing tobacco will not be allowed anywhere on or near the field of play. This will prevent spitting and the need to clean up items that have been in someone's mouth.

No food will be allowed in the dugout or on the field of play.

No concessions or sales of food, drink or goods will occur at the fields.

All players, coaches and fans will be required to clean and remove all trash and items from their designated area.

During games, coaches will refrain from touching balls in play. The defensive team will provide the balls while they are in the field reducing cross contact between teams.

Umpires should not handle softballs and should wear gloves if they intend to handle softballs. Change gloves after each use when handling softballs.

Monitoring and escalation management

Parents, players, coaches, and umpires will be asked to closely monitor themselves and family members for symptoms or known direct (one to one) exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19. *We will ask all parties involved to notify the EGFA Board immediately of any COVID-19 diagnosis, major symptoms, or direct one to one exposure. The Edina Fastpitch Association Board will then follow CDC and MNDH guidelines on how to handle potential exposures while maintaining the health privacy of all involved. Since these guidelines are fluid, we will not state them here. The following protocols will be followed at all times.

Any player, coach, umpire or fan diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be allowed on or near the field of play until they are provided with a note from a medical professional indicating they no longer require isolation.

Any player, coach, umpire or fan with a fever or clear respiratory symptoms will not be allowed on or near the field of play.

Any player, coach, umpire or fan who has been directly exposed (one to one) to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 will not be allowed on the field of play until 14 days have passed.

If the Edina Fastpitch board is notified that any player or coach of an Edina team is diagnosed with COVID-19 we will follow CDC and MNDH notification and suspension protocols.

If we are notified that an umpire or player / coach from an opposing team is diagnosed with COVID-19 we will follow CDC and MNDH notification and suspension protocols.

Secondary exposure does not trigger the rules above. For example, a player's parent works in the medical field and it is known that they have had direct contact with COVID-19 patients in the past 14 days. This would not disqualify the player from participating.

Parents and players may make their own decisions to suspend participation at any time.

*It is important to note that Edina Fastpitch Board cannot require a person to be tested for COVID-19 or guarantee that, despite its best efforts to adhere to evolving guidelines from the CDC, MNDH and Governor of the State of Minnesota, there will no health risk associated with participation in a team sport. Accordingly, parents/guardians of all players wishing to participate in the 2020 season will be required, as a condition of participation, to provide BOTH signed ADULT and PARTICIPANT Waiver and Consent as attached.

Credits:

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- St Louis Park Fastpitch Association - (Kristina Healy and Paul Fadden)
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M Health Fairview/Institute for Athletic Medicine is the official medical partner of the MYAS.

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

Applicable Information/guidelines from the state of Montana:

https://406mtsports.com/baseball/legion/following-reopening-guidelines-montana-american-union-legion-baseball-teams-can-start-practicing/article_77549909-7349-538c-8547-a9062a0ecd28.html