

## COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines



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Inside this document are best practices for teams to follow for the GATEWAY BABE RUTH LEAGUE. These best practices are designed to help all involved, with plans for operating games during the COVID-19 situation. They do not replace or supersede any protocols or restrictions outlined by state or local authorities. All coaches and volunteer members must continue to follow the local or state guidelines that have been established.

As areas begin to reopen and play resumes, we strongly urge any coaches that are on the field to contact the Advisory Sub-Committee with details of any and all challenges that may arise; which might not be addressed in this document. Once an issue is identified, we will work to mitigate the issue and then share that information with all teams and coaches.

Advisory Sub-Committee:

A GATEWAY BABE RUTH Baseball League Advisory Sub-Committee has been assembled to develop return-to-play guidelines and best practices for teams, managers, coaches, umpires, and spectators to safely return to the baseball field. Please note that all guidelines from local and state officials supersede league recommendations and procedures.

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Rules for Phase II Limited Organized Sports Activities and Programs

- Amateur Sports: Effective immediately, organizers of sports activities and programs for youths and adults and facilities that host such programs or activities may open their premises to employees to begin preparations, consistent with the provisions of Section 1, for authorized Phase II activities. In addition to complying with generally applicable COVID-19 workplace safety rules, organizers of sports activities and programs for youths and adults and facilities that host such programs or activities shall be subject to the following directives during Phase II:
  - a. Programs for contact sports must limit activities exclusively to no-contact drills and practices. Programs for no contact sports where ordinary play allows for social distancing may include ordinary play.
  - b. Games, scrimmages, and tournaments shall not be permitted for any organized sports activities.
  - c. Programs must separate participants into groups of no more than 10 participants, including coaches and staff.
  - d. Indoor athletic facilities shall be open and available exclusively for the use of supervised sports programs, including sports camps, for youths under the age of 18.
- The Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs ("EEA") shall issue guidance to implement these directives and all generally applicable COVID-19 workplace standards for organizers of youth and adult sports programs and operators of facilities that host those programs. Organizers of youth and adult sports programs shall follow the EEA guidance; provided, however, that when the program is governed by formal league rules or other binding agreements or affiliations, the organizer shall comply with any COVID-19 and other health and safety rules applicable under those authorities. The requirements of items (a) - (d) above shall apply in all circumstances.

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Game Preparation Procedures

- ALL GATEWAY BABE RUTH Baseball League Teams are to follow the local and state guidelines for facilities, athletic fields, and events.
- An e-mail notification must be sent to all team managers, coaches, and players/parents prior to league play. The e-mail should include the following;
  - a. Encourage all event attendees to practice social distancing;
  - b. Explain that any person who is experiencing symptoms of sickness (fever, chills, coughing, and shortness of breath) will be prohibited from attending the event/venue of play; and
  - c. Make clear that all posted and published local and state-regulated guidelines shall be followed.
- Take proactive steps in creating social distancing environments, where possible;
  - a. Inspect designated seating and viewing areas for spectators.
  - b. When using a tent, restrict it to family members only.
- Minimize player contact by eliminating team/player handshakes and team/player high fives.
- No group gatherings between teams on the field. Create an environment to keep social distancing between teams in effect beyond the field of play.
  - a. Recommend other means of game celebrations and team sportsmanship at the end of games (e.g., ask players to tip their caps/visors to each other from across the field).
- Coaches, players, umpires, and spectators must adhere to the guidelines from CDC, state, and local authorities regarding potential state travel restrictions and stay-at home orders.
- In dugouts, discontinue use of team supplied water coolers. Players should bring their own, personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players are to use individual water bottle(s) marked for easy identification to that specific player.

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Recommended Best Practices for the Field-of-Play

- Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
- The coaches meeting at home plate should be limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires using social distancing guidelines e.g., six-feet apart. No players allowed at plate meeting. Eliminate the meeting if possible.
- Where possible, consider options for limiting both the pitching and the scorecard exchanges in order to reduce person-to-person contact.
- Allow teams to spread players out; by expanding the dugout area when room permits and only if player safety will not be compromised. Expansion of the team dugouts should not be done into foul ball areas (this could be accepted if spectators are not allowed to come in contact with players). Limit bench personnel to essential team personnel.
- Encourage parents to supply their players with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting equipment and cleaning hands between innings. Avoid any equipment sharing when possible.
- Allow players to wear Personal Protective Equipment items if they choose, as long as the items do not compromise the safety of any and all participants in the game. Recommend the wear of a face covering that easily rolls down around your neck when no one is within six-feet of your person.
- Upon arriving at a dugout for the first time, teams are to disinfect hard surface areas (benches, bat racks, etc.).
  - a. Comply with the CDC recommendation of a two-step process of cleaning and disinfecting.
- 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.
  - a. Comply with the CDC recommendation of a two-step process of cleaning and disinfecting.
- Compliant game balls must be designated to each team for use while that team is playing defense.
- No spitting or eating seeds, gum, other similar products.
- Make sure players water bottles or drinks are marked with the players name or number on it to avoid drinking someone else's drinks
- Follow social distancing guidelines when leaving field with teammates, visiting team, and spectators.
- EVERYONE should be wiping down doorknobs and any surfaces prior to using and after using at the restrooms and please don't flush wipes, please discard in trash barrels.

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Coaches Guidelines

- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms (fever, chills, coughing, and shortness of breath) must stay home.
- Should ensure the players are adhering to social distancing and wearing face coverings in dugouts and other areas while not actively participating on the field of play.
- When possible, equipment and personal items should have proper separation and should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, it should be sanitized between users.

Umpire Guidelines

- Must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms (fever, chills, coughing, and shortness of breath) must stay home.
- Must adhere to six-foot social distancing guidelines to the best extent possible.
- Must wear a face covering.
- Must wear disposable gloves
- Where possible, consider options for limiting both the pitching and the scorecard exchanges in order to reduce person-to-person contact.

Spectator Guidelines

- Must conduct a symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Anyone experiencing symptoms (fever, chills, coughing, and shortness of breath) must stay home.
- Must adhere to six-foot social distancing guidelines. This pertains to in/near the bleachers for anyone not in the same family.
  - When using a tent, restrict it to family members only.
- Must not enter player areas that are located on the field of play or dugout areas.
- Must keep six-feet or more distance from the backstop, fence and out of play line.

BABE RUTH LEAGUE COVID-19 WAIVER

AMATEUR ATHLETIC WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

READ BEFORE SIGNING In consideration of being allowed to participate in any way in

\_\_\_\_\_ athletic sports program, related events and activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that: 1. The risks of injury and illness (ex: communicable diseases such as MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19) from the activities involved in this program are significant, potentially life-threatening, and while particular rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce these risks, the risks of serious injury and illness do exist; and, 2. I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my participation; and, 3. I willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If, however, I observe any unusual significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately; and, 4. I acknowledge that I am aware that there are risks to me of exposure to directly or indirectly arising out of, contributed to, by, or resulting from: ☐ An outbreak of any and all communicable disease, including but not limited to, the virus "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)", which is responsible for Coronavirus Disease (COVID19) and/or any mutation or variation thereof; 5. In consideration of having the opportunity to participate as either a team member or competitor at location, and in acknowledging that I am aware of and willing to assume the risks associated with this activity, I hereby voluntarily agree to waive, hold harmless and indemnify Babe Ruth League, Inc. and its trustees, agents, volunteers and employees from any and all claims, demands, damages and causes of action of any nature whatsoever arising out of ordinary negligence which I, my heirs, my assigns or successors may have against them for, on account of, or by reason of my participation in the above activities. I indicate my agreement to this hold harmless elective noted below.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE (UNDER AGE 18 AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION)

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian with legal responsibility for this participant, have read and explained the provisions in this waiver/release to my child/ward including the risks of the activity and his/her responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations. Furthermore, my child/ward understands and accepts these risks and responsibilities. I for myself, my spouse, and child/ward do consent and agree to his/her release provided above for all the Releasees and myself, my spouse, and child/ward do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees from any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's/ward's involvement or participation in these activities as provided above, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Basic First Aid**

The safety and health of the players in The Gateway Baseball League is the most important aspect for the coaching staff to focus on. As with most sports, injuries will take place during the game of baseball and every safety measure should be taken into consideration to help with prevention.

Every team in the Gateway Baseball Team should possess an up to date First Aid kit.

Managers and Coaches should familiarize themselves with proper First Aid techniques;

- Minor problems such as cuts, scratches, etc., should be taken care of immediately.
- In the event of possible fractures, concussions, or internal injury, contact the local emergency unit for treatment and transportation to a hospital. If there is any type of head injury, the player **MUST BE** removed from the game.
  - Always get professional medical assistance if there is a serious injury.
  - **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TRANSPORT** any player who may be suffering from a suspected fracture, head or neck injury, call trained emergency personnel.
- Heat exhaustion is a common problem when playing in the summer.
- Ensure players have a sufficient amount of water available at every game and practice setting.

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## **Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy**

The Gateway Baseball League is committed to provide youth baseball opportunities to all qualified players, coaches, and volunteers without regard to race, color, age, national origin, sex, disability, ancestry, gender identity, religion, or sexual orientation.

Harassment and discrimination are against the league spirit and will not be tolerated. Sportsmanship will be endorsed to promote fair and generous behavior, all while representing the league.

**DO NOT:**

- Use slurs, insults, jokes about someone's race, gender, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, ancestry, gender identity, or sexual orientation.
- Abuse, intimidate, or bully someone based on race, gender, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender norms.

## **Diversity Policy Statement**

The Gateway Baseball League is committed to building the climate that promotes mutual respect, acceptance, and teamwork amongst people from multiple and diverse backgrounds. Diversity, inclusion, fairness, and integrity will drive the success of the league.

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### **Protocol for Changes to This Document**

Due to the uncertain aspects in return to play, this document is expected to change based on new procedures and feedback from our managers/coaches. You should always follow your local and state guidelines. League officials are advised to revisit this document for accuracy on a weekly basis. Any changes will be done via document version control and all versions will be retained.

### **REFERENCES:**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/reopening-massachusetts-may-18-2020/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/outdoor-recreation-task-force-presentation-5-18-20/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/executive-order-preparing-for-phase-ii-reopening/download>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>