

JOINT STATEMENT: Metro Baseball League, Minnesota Youth Athletic Services (MYAS)/Gopher State Baseball League, and Minnesota Softball

Over the past month, the Metro Baseball League, MYAS/Gopher State Baseball, and Minnesota Softball have been consulting with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) state epidemiologists to better understand any updated COVID-19 recommendations/guidance as we move into the youth baseball/softball season.

At this time, please read and adhere to the **guidance** below and follow all requirements and recommendations found in the 2021 MN Safe Play: Back to the Diamond Guidelines (linked) as you begin outdoor practices and games. Additional recommendations regarding outdoor youth sports will be made available by the Governor's office and the MDH in the coming weeks.

As a unified front for a better state of baseball/softball, our organizations are committed to providing you with timely updates as we are made aware of them. The commitment of providing a safe and healthy environment for our youth athletes on the diamond will be a priority throughout the duration of the season.

Guidance from MDH State Epidemiologists as Youth Baseball/Softball Begins

Until such time as the current recommendations are updated, [MDH COVID-19 Organized Sports Practice and Games Guidance for Youth Sports](#) guidance (effective 3/14/2021) remains in effect for outdoor spring sports, and should be used and referenced for making organizational policies and protocols. This includes the following recommendations:

- Follow physical distancing guidance, including six (6) feet between participants when not playing and between spectators or household groups, and twelve (12)feet between spectators and participants (page 4).
- Face covering requirements:
 - Participants (players): masks are not required if athletes can stay at least six (6) feet away from others; players are required to wear a mask when around others and not actively playing/training (page 5).
 - Umpires, Coaches, and Spectators: masks are not required when six (6) feet of distance from others can be consistently maintained. *

* Based on MDH guidance on face coverings ([Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations - Minnesota Dept. of Health \(state.mn.us\)](#)); exceptions noted in [Executive Order 20-81](#); and exceptions noted in [Outdoor Rec Guidelines, page 3](#) regarding wearing a mask when outdoors.

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- Exposure Assessment: In terms of determining close contacts, consider the following:
 - For outdoor sports, the entire team does not automatically have to be placed into quarantine. Consider each situation on a case-by-case basis.
 - To determine close contact, exposure is defined as:
 - Direct exposure to respiratory droplets from the case (e.g., spitting, coughing, or sneezing).
 - Direct physical contact like tackling, checking, guarding, or other close physical contact with the case.
 - If none of the above apply, then consider: Being within six (6) feet of someone contagious with COVID-19 for fifteen (15) minutes or more. This criterion is generally not recommended for exposure assessment during sports play, but may be appropriate to use when assessing exposure during non-play situations such as sitting on the bench or dugout, the locker room, etc.
 - Consider rides to and from the facility and other close contact situations, such as high fives, huddles, etc. (for example, one incident of a high five or huddle would likely constitute an exposure).
 - Notify teammates of the case and the opposing team in a game, that they might have been exposed to a case, and while they might not be considered “close contacts,” they should have heightened awareness of symptoms.

For questions, please email the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Sports Team at health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us.

