



Markham District Softball Association 2021 Return-to-Play Protocol

At Markham District Softball Association (MDSA) our first priority is to take all reasonable precautions to make the ballpark a safe, fun, and respectful place for children to play and families to gather. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic we are taking steps in respect of public health guidance, provincial Return-to-Play protocols, and softball considerations to keep our parks safe and our games fun for all.

To make the 2021 season a success, we're implementing the following COVID-19 related precautions:

During Step One of Provincial Reopening Plan

During Step One, there will be no games held. The league will be divided into 10-player, 2-coach groups that will separately participate in "skills and drills" practices, subject to the requirements of this Return to Play Protocol. Groups may not mix players during a given training session. Players may not "stay for the following session" to get more training, for example, if two sessions are scheduled back to back..

During Step Two of Provincial Reopening Plan

During Step Two, gameplay will resume, subject to the requirements of this Return to Play protocol.

General Requirements - Summary

- All individuals entering the park will be screened and required to wear a mask during their arrival at the park.
- Once the player has arrived at the park and has been properly checked-in with the COVID-19 Screening App, the player may choose to remove her mask for the Session (Step 1 only) or Game (Step 2 only). Upon leaving the park, the mask should be put back on.
- Coaches shall wear their masks at all times.
- Hand Sanitizer will be provided for all players. Hands and any shared equipment (softballs only) will be sanitized frequently during play.
- Washroom facilities will not be available.
- All participants will need to provide their own equipment, and equipment may not be shared.
- Physical distancing will be maintained between all individuals present at the park at all times.
- Spectators will not be allowed in the Provincial "Step One" of the Ontario "Roadmap to Reopen". Limited spectators will be allowed in Provincial "Step Two". Spectators will not be allowed near the player bench at any time. Details are provided later in this document.
- Illness will be taken seriously, with individuals removed from the field of play until such time as a note from a doctor or recognized Public Health Authority is provided to the league.
- Violations of the policy will result in immediate removal from the park. Repeated violations will result in forfeiture of further participation in league events.



Detailed Requirements

Masks

- All individuals arriving at the park will be required to wear a mask.
- Once the **player** has entered the park and has been properly checked-in with the COVID-19 Screening App, the player may choose to remove her mask for the session or game (Depending on applicable Provincial Step - 1 or 2). The player's mask should be readily available to put back on if required for any reason.
- Coaches, Umpires and Parents/Guardians shall wear their masks at all times.
- No one should eat at the park. This includes Sunflower seeds, chewing gum, etc.

Screening

- All persons entering the diamond (including players, coaches and umpires) will answer a screening questionnaire within the MDSA COVID-19 Screening App and perform their Self Assessment prior to leaving from home to travel to the park. Individuals exhibiting any symptoms indicative of COVID-19 risk are asked to stay home and not travel to the park.

Hand Sanitization

- Hand sanitizer will be provided for all players. Coaches will encourage the use of sanitizer before, during, and after games and practices.

Facilities

- Washroom facilities will not be made available by MDSA.

Equipment

- Players will need to provide all of their own equipment. This will include gloves, helmets, face masks, batting gloves, and bats. All equipment should be labelled.
- Equipment (including softball equipment, water bottles, etc.) may not be shared among players.
- All equipment must be labelled with the player's name to avoid confusion.
- No bat persons will be allowed. One coach from each team will be responsible for retrieving bats. The coach must sanitize their hands after retrieving each bat.
- In the event there is a bat near home plate that poses a danger for the players, the umpire will move it out of the way, with his/her foot.
- Players will be required to keep their equipment separated and neatly stored in the bench area.
- Catchers will be designated on a weekly basis using their own equipment. In the event that more than one set of catcher's equipment is assigned to a team, the number of catchers to be assigned on a weekly basis will be limited to the number of sets of equipment available.
- Each defensive team will provide their own game ball for the use of their team only during gameplay.
- Foul balls and home run balls must be retrieved by the defensive team only.
- Softballs will be sanitized by the defensive team once per half-inning during the game.



Interactions

- Players will not be allowed to high-five, huddle and/or handshake. Teams will be encouraged to develop contact-free, respectful celebrations that can be engaged in at distance.
- Bench areas will be extended to allow for physical distancing of players during games and practices. Players will be encouraged to bring their own chair for seating during the game.
 - **In Step One of the Provincial Reopening Plan**, all participants will be required to maintain 3-metres' distance at all times
- As players enter and exit the field, they will need to maintain 3-metre distance at all times. Players not required to be on the field should not enter the playing surface (e.g. home run celebrations)
- Coaches will be required to maintain physical distancing at all times.
 - **In Step One of the Provincial Reopening Plan**, all coaches will be required to maintain 3-metres' distance at all times.
- Catcher, batter, and umpire will maintain 2-metres' distance, when possible (**this will be applicable during Step Two of the reopening plan**, during gameplay, only).
- Base coaches and baserunners must maintain 3-metres' distance at all times.
- Consideration should be given as to whether having an on-deck batter reduces the ability of the batter/catcher/umpire to remain 2-metres apart. If so, there shall be no on-deck batter allowed.
- Conferences between coach and pitcher are limited to one coach, with the coach remaining 3-metres from the pitcher at all times.
- In the event of injury, the player's parent or guardian will be summoned to attend to the medical needs of the child.

Spectators – Step One of Provincial Reopening Plan

- No spectators are allowed with the exception of one (1) parent or guardian who is permitted to accompany a person under the age of 18 engaged in the outdoor activity. The parent/guardian must not be on the field of play and must maintain a physical distance of 3-metres from other parents/guardians.
- The above mentioned parent or guardian, is expected to remain at the park, to attend to their child in the event of any medical need. In the event a parent or guardian cannot attend, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to arrange for another responsible adult to be present and available to attend to the medical needs of the child.

Spectators – Step Two of Provincial Reopening Plan

- One spectator only per child may attend the field.
- One parent/guardian (or, as detailed above, designated responsible adult) per child is expected to remain at the park in the event of any medical need.
- Spectators will not be allowed to watch the game from inside the infield baselines or diamond fencing. Spectators will need to bring their own chairs or blankets and sit further



down the foul line, beyond first or third base, or behind the outfield fence with 3-metre physical distance between.

- Spectators will need to follow similar rules of wearing facemasks at all times, no eating, screening, limited interactions, etc.

Inclement Weather

If there is inclement weather that suspends play or practice, all individuals will be required to gather all of their equipment and return to their individual vehicles. Congregation under shelters / trees will not be allowed.

Policy Violations

In the event of any COVID-19 policy violation, play or practice will be immediately suspended and both the individual committing the violation and any family attending the park with the individual will be asked to leave the park. Violations will be reported to the Home Association, and repeated violations may result in removal from further participation in the league.

Illness

- If a participant becomes ill while on-site, the participant will be isolated and removed from the activity to the care and custody of their parent or guardian, and sent home for the remainder of the activity.
- The activity will be suspended while all equipment and facilities (dugouts, bases, balls, etc.) are sanitized. A league representative will contact the family of the individual after the event to gather information on any test results that may be received.
- An individual with either a positive COVID-19 test result, or symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will only be allowed to return to play after:
 - A doctor's note clearing the individual to return to play is received by MDSA leadership,or,
 - The local public health authority/unit has advised that the individual is considered recovered per Ontario/local public health guidelines and cleared to return to play.

Other Considerations

- No team snacks will be allowed.
- No concession areas will be available.
- Pre-game ground rules will be communicated by the umpire to one representative from each team, maintaining 3-metres' distance at all times.
- Players must not lick their fingers.
- Each team must sanitize their dugout after use.
- Post-game handshakes are not to be conducted. Each team shall prepare a respectful method to acknowledge their opponent at distance.
- During any post-game conferences with team/parents, the duration of such conferences shall be minimized, and 3 metres' distance shall be maintained between families at all times.
- In Step One of the Provincial Reopening Plan, post-practice conferences are not allowed.



- Players and families entering and exiting the park must maintain 3-metres' distance at all times.
- Coaches meetings will be held on a bi-weekly basis to gather feedback on the efficacy and practicality of these measures.
- Players' parents/guardians will be required to sign a Return to Play Waiver that releases the league from any liability associated with COVID-19 transmission.

Review and Update

- This document will be reviewed and updated according to revised public health guidance, emerging legislation, or evolving infection-control best practices.

Please sign below indicating you have read and understood this Protocol and scan (or take a picture) and send the finalized document to info@markhamdistrictsoftball.ca

Parent/Guardian

Date
