



Baseball Sask Return to Train and Play Guidelines



Baseball Sask
Return to Train and Play
Guidelines
June 9, 2020



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Baseball Sask Return to Train and Play Guidelines

***Please note, these Guidelines are subject to change at any time based on requirements from the Sask Health Authority and Government of Saskatchewan.**

The purpose of this document is to outline the approved Return to Train and Play Guidelines for the sport of baseball in the province of Saskatchewan. These guidelines are provided to all organized baseball organizations through membership at Baseball Sask and have been approved by the Baseball Sask Board of Governors.

These Return to Train and Play Guidelines are required to be in place and executed in full in order to start up any organized baseball activities by order of Baseball Sask and must be followed as outlined. Noncompliance can lead to removal of facility access through the municipality in which you offer baseball programming, by law fines or even provincial health officer order to cease activity.

Background on Return to Train and Play Protocol

This protocol details our plan from health and safety regulations to communications to our membership and modified season structure.

As the return to train and play baseball plan progresses, it will do so based on direction from Sask Health Authority and the Government of Saskatchewan. The game will look much different than our traditional game. This will be required for the allowance to play this summer due to Covid-19. Therefore, we ask for your patience and cooperation to maintain social distancing as well as sanitization to enable our players the opportunity to play this summer.

Mandate

The mandate is to prepare guidelines that can be submitted for approval that would allow our athletes and clubs to resume the baseball season in some form.

Required content included safety and personal hygiene measures to be incorporated for all participants during the COVID-19 pandemic, possible adaptations to playing rules to allow for the expected restrictions in place at any time through an Order of the Provincial Health Officer and general guidelines that may not necessarily fall under any of the above categories.

Philosophy

Given Saskatchewan has never experienced such unprecedented times, it is felt that in order to provide a safe Return to Play protocol and prove that baseball as a sport is in fact able to ensure all protocols are being met by the participants, that a phased approach best allows us to learn from any one phase before we move onto the next one. This will work to ensure the safety of all participants.



Baseball Sask Return to Train and Play Guidelines

The following make up our return to train and play plan implementation Phases:

- **Phase 1 – Return to Train**
 - Build Foundational Plan around safety and personal hygiene
 - Build Return to Train protocols for athletes within a PRACTICE environment

- **Phase 2 – Return to Play**
 - Build Foundational Plan around safety and personal hygiene
 - Build Return to Play protocols for athletes within GAME play

Areas of Focus

- a) Assumptions
- b) Personal Health and Hygiene
- c) Facility Adaptations
- d) General Recommendations
- e) Administration Recommendations and Responsibilities

Phase 1 – Return to Train

Dates to be Determined by Government of Saskatchewan “Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan”

All Levels – Rally Cap, 11U, 13U, 15U, 18U, 21U & Senior

a) Assumptions

This section identifies the assumptions considered in the drafting of guidelines as they relate to the current Government of Saskatchewan orders on social distancing and on municipalities current closure of all recreational facilities.

- It is assumed that municipalities and local parks and recreation departments will have had to re-open their facilities to the general public and association permit holders. All Minor Ball Clubs will need to receive approval from them first in order to resume play locally.
- It is assumed that Insurance providers have permitted the return to play guidelines and that liability exposure is not a concern for anyone involved. By point of reminder, no insurance coverage is provided for any claim related to COVID-19 at present as suggested by Baseball Sask Insurer AON and their underwriter, Markel Canada.
- It is assumed that the relevant health authorities will take the lead on any future confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 and no additional work would be needed by the local association.
- It is assumed that compliance policing will be performed by local and provincial health authorities, local association or club personal, athletes and parents, along with all relevant stakeholders.



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b) Personal Health and Hygiene

FOUNDATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

These activities shall not be permitted:

- No sharing of water bottles or food of any kind
 - No spitting, chewing gum or sunflower seeds
 - No sharing of personal helmets
 - No sharing of catcher's gear unless disinfected between personal uses
 - No sharing of any other equipment unless disinfected between personal uses
-
- All requirements in place for outdoor team sports, as dictated by the Sask Health Authority and the Government of Saskatchewan, in regard to the maximum number of people permitted in outdoor gatherings, physical distancing and other protective rules, shall be observed by Baseball Sask and its membership.
 - Anyone taking part in baseball shall observe proper hygienic practices while participating in any Baseball Sask sanctioned events.
 - Anyone displaying **ANY** illness symptoms **WILL NOT** be allowed to participate.
 - Anyone who has been in contact with someone who is sick or not feeling well should also consider not participating.
 - Ride Sharing to be discouraged whenever possible.
 - Bases and baseballs are to be disinfected after each session.
 - All participants to disinfect their equipment after each event.
 - All uniforms or clothing to be washed after each event.
 - All participants to shower/bath at first opportunity after each event.
 - No sharing of personal items like phones, wallets, etc.
 - All commonly touched surfaces at the ballfield – benches, hooks on the back of the dugout, gates that are touched shall be disinfected at the end of each game/practice by the team using that area.
 - For any baseball facilities that have bathrooms and/or canteens, both areas shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before each evening in use. If these areas are being used for an entire day, these areas also should be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day as well.
 - Physical distancing must take place in and outside the dugout, including players and coaches. Therefore, there can only be as many people in a dugout at one time as is permitted by physical distancing.
 - For example, if a dugout is twenty feet long, there could be no more than four people in the dugout at once, and each person must stay at least six feet away from other people.



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- If possible, hand sanitizer should be available to all players and coaches to use throughout the practice.
- All gear should be sanitized after each practice.
- All team meetings before, during or after the practice for coaching or teaching purposes shall respect physical distancing requirements.
- At any facility with more than one baseball field, each player, coach, official or person involved at a field must stay at the field their practice is taking place. They cannot go over to the other field(s) and watch as they may contribute to the breaking of the maximum number of people permitted in an outdoor gathering. Each field is considered one outdoor gathering, so long as people do not cross over into other fields

PRACTICE

- **All Foundational requirements to be met as outlined above.**
- No team huddles before, during or after the practice for coaching or teaching purposes
- All drills to be created and implemented ensuring social distancing requirements are met.
- Only 1 team to practice at a time. No joint practices.

GAME

- **There will be no games played during the Return to Train Phase.**

c) Facility Adaptations

- Indoor Events (practice, cage, meeting, other) are permitted. However, it is mandatory to follow current Phase guidelines for number of people indoors as per the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan. Social distancing must also be maintained. Outdoor hitting facilities can be used permitting providing social distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No changing or dressing rooms permitted.
- Signage advising and educating on social distancing measures in place should be present at every field and facility utilized.
- All field prep equipment to be disinfected and cleaned after every use.
- All fan seating to be configured with social distancing requirements adhered to.
- Number of parents or fans attending (Including teams on the field) must not go above the current maximum outdoor social gathering limit.
- No gathering around the park until your scheduled start time (please wait in your car). Athletes must leave the park immediately after the practice.



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d) **General Recommendations**

- Attendance must be taken at every event for all people in attendance including parents (drivers).
- Concessions to be open or provided only through approval of the respective health department and considering both traditional and updated regulations related to COVID-19
- Protocols to disinfect, after every use, team and personal gear (catchers and umpires) need to be in place.
- All discussion or coaching through any means to include reminders to players regarding social distancing, no spitting, no face touching, no contact between the athletes.

e) **Administration Recommendations and Responsibilities**

- Associations should be aware that not all athletes originally registered will choose to or feel comfortable returning.
- Secondary registration drives may be required.
- Drafts may need re-doing
- Associations are encouraged to immediately refund any athletes that choose not to return (minus any administrative fees agreed upon at the local association level) upon notice.
- Every club or local association should convene a return to play committee.
- Every club or local association should implement Health and Safety roles within both the club / local association as well as with EACH team.
- A waiver will likely be needed for EVERY participant in order to RTP.
- Clubs / local associations will need to source Sanitizer, wipes and gloves and face masks (if needed) given stock issues related to the products. (this would be eligible for MAP Funding)
- Field allotments will need to be modified to allow for all events to stay under the 30-person social gathering limits. It is suggested that you move to 1.5 times the traditional allotment window.
- Each club or local association should perform a risk analysis on their ability to execute this protocol prior to committing to starting up programming.



Baseball Sask Return to Train and Play Guidelines

Phase 2 – Return to Play

Dates to be Determined by Government of Saskatchewan “Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan”

All Levels – Rally Cap, 11U, 13U, 15U, 18U, 21U & Senior

a) Assumptions

This section identifies the assumptions considered in the drafting of guidelines as they relate to the current Government of Saskatchewan orders on social distancing and on municipalities current closure of all recreational facilities.

- It is assumed that municipalities and local parks and recreation departments will have had to re-open their facilities to the general public and association permit holders. All Minor Ball Clubs will need to receive approval from them first in order to resume play locally.
- It is assumed that Insurance providers have permitted the return to play guidelines and that liability exposure is not a concern for anyone involved. By point of reminder, no insurance coverage is provided for any claim related to COVID-19 at present as suggested by Baseball Sask Insurer AON Insurance and their underwriter, Markel Canada at present.
- It is assumed that the relevant health authorities will take the lead on any future confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 and no additional work would be needed by the local association.
- It is assumed that compliance policing will be performed by local and provincial health authorities, local association or club personal, athletes and parents, along with all relevant stakeholders.

b) Personal Health and Hygiene

FOUNDATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

These activities shall not be permitted:

- No sharing of water bottles or food of any kind
- No spitting, chewing gum or sunflower seeds
- No sharing of personal helmets
- No sharing of catcher’s gear unless disinfected between personal uses
- No sharing of any other equipment unless disinfected between personal uses
- All requirements in place for outdoor team sports, as dictated by the Sask Health Authority and the Government of Saskatchewan, in regard to the maximum number of people permitted in outdoor gatherings, physical distancing and other protective rules, shall be observed by Baseball Sask and its membership.
- Anyone taking part in baseball shall observe proper hygienic practices while participating in any Baseball Sask sanctioned events.



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- Anyone displaying **ANY** illness symptoms **WILL NOT** be allowed to participate.
- Anyone who has been in contact with anyone who is sick or not feeling well should also consider not participating.
- Ride Sharing to be discouraged whenever possible.
- Bases and baseballs are to be disinfected after each session.
- All participants to disinfect their equipment after each event.
- All uniforms or clothing to be washed after each event.
- All participants to shower/bath at first opportunity after each event.
- No sharing of personal items like phones, wallets, etc.
- All commonly touched surfaces at the ballfield – benches, hooks on the back of the dugout, gates that are touched shall be disinfected at the end of each game/practice by the team using that area.
- For any baseball facilities that have bathrooms and/or canteens, both areas shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before each evening in use. If these areas are being used for an entire day, these areas also should be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day as well.
- Physical distancing must take place in and outside the dugout, including players and coaches. Therefore, there can only be as many people in a dugout at one time as is permitted by physical distancing.
- For example, if a dugout is twenty feet long, there could be no more than four people in the dugout at once, and each person must stay at least six feet away from other people.
- If possible, hand sanitizer should be available to all players and coaches to use throughout the game/practice.
- All gear should be sanitized after each game/practice.
- All team meetings before, during or after the game/practice for coaching or teaching purposes shall respect physical distancing requirements.
- At any facility with more than one baseball field, each player, coach, official or person involved at a field must stay at the field their game/practice is taking place. They cannot go over to the other field(s) and watch as they may contribute to the breaking of the maximum number of people permitted in an outdoor gathering. Each field is considered one outdoor gathering, so long as people do not cross over into other fields

PRACTICE

- **All Foundational requirements to be met as outlined above.**
- No team huddles before, during or after the practice for coaching or teaching purposes
- All drills to be created and implemented ensuring social distancing requirements are met.
- Only 1 team to practice at a time. No joint practices.



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GAME

- **All Foundational requirements to be met as outlined above.**
- No plate meetings pre-game for lineup exchanges.
- No team huddles before, during or after the game for coaching or teaching purposes.
- Mound visits are permitted between the coach, pitcher, and catcher. 2 meters physical distancing must be adhered to between all three individuals.
- No arguing with umpires within social distancing minimum requirements. Any instances to be met with a suspension for the remainder of the year.
- No postgame handshakes.
- All players to sanitize their hands when returning to the dugout from the field, after each at bat and as required.

Umpire Considerations

- Bring your own water and hand sanitizer (should they forget sanitizer, kindly ask home team coach to use some of theirs if possible)
- Recommended to wear a mask and properly use hand sanitizer on a regular basis throughout the game.
- Plate Umpire is permitted to work behind catcher, avoiding any contact with the catcher. However, should they feel more comfortable social distancing, they can choose to call balls and strikes behind the pitching mound.
- Limit the handling of baseballs, line up cards.
- Ensure proper Social distancing (6ft) is followed when possible.
- Ensure baseballs were sanitized by home team prior to the start of each competition.

c) Facility Adaptations

- Indoor Events (practice, cage, meeting, other) are permitted. However, it is mandatory to follow current Phase guidelines for number of people indoors as per the Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan. Social distancing must also be maintained. Outdoor hitting facilities can be used permitting providing social distancing requirements are adhered to.
- No changing or dressing rooms permitted.
- Signage advising and educating on social distancing measures in place should be present at every field and facility utilized.
- All field prep equipment to be disinfected and cleaned after every use.
- Number of parents or fans attending (Including teams on the field) must not go above the current maximum outdoor social gathering limit.
- No gathering around the park until your scheduled start time (please wait in your car). Athletes must leave the park immediately after the practice or game



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d) General Recommendations

- Attendance must be taken at every event for all people in attendance including parents (drivers).
- Concessions to be open or provided only through approval of the respective health department and considering both traditional and updated regulations related to COVID-19
- Protocols to disinfect, after every use, team and personal gear (catchers and umpires) need to be in place.
- All discussion or coaching through any means to include reminders to players regarding social distancing, no spitting, no face touching, no contact between the athletes.

e) Administration Recommendations and Responsibilities

- Associations should be aware that not all athletes originally registered will choose to or feel comfortable returning.
- Secondary registration drives may be required.
- Drafts may need re-doing
- Associations are encouraged to immediately refund any athletes that choose not to return (minus any administrative fees agreed upon at the local association level) upon notice.
- Every club or local association should convene a return to play committee.
- Every club or local association should implement Health and Safety roles within both the club / local association as well as with EACH team.
- A waiver will likely be needed for EVERY participant in order to RTP.
- Clubs / local associations will need to source Sanitizer, wipes and gloves and face masks (if needed) given stock issues related to the products. (this would be eligible for MAP Funding)
- Field allotments will need to be modified to allow for all events to stay under the 30-person social gathering limits. It is suggested that you move to 1.5 times the traditional allotment window.
- Each club or local association should perform a risk analysis on their ability to execute this protocol prior to committing to starting up programming.

Groundskeeping & Maintenance

- Minimize the number of maintenance personnel working on the field at one time. Consider splitting the crew into two teams that do not work at the same time.
- Always maintain physical distancing guidelines.
- Assign staff equipment to avoid sharing between employees.
- Stagger work hours and break hours and limit access to lunchrooms or workstations.
- Place hand sanitizer throughout maintenance area and access to hand washing stations
- Regularly sanitize any surface that is contacted – common areas
- If equipment (including mowers) must be shared, they must be sanitized before being used by another employee | steering wheel as well as all areas touched by operators pre and post use.



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- Practice handwashing and standard hygiene practices.
- No visitors to the facilities.

In Conclusion

We look forward to seeing you all back on the baseball diamond soon. However, remember that this cannot happen until the Government of Saskatchewan and the Sask Health Authority open up Phase 4 of the “Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan.”

Until Phase 4 opens and we are able to lift the suspended state of all Baseball Sask sanctioned activities, there is no insurance coverage provided. However, once we get the go ahead for Phase 4, all registered members on the Ramp Online Registration System will be insured and will be required to sign a waiver form allowing them to play again.