



USA SOFTBALL™
of New Hampshire

Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force
State House
Concord, NH 03301

May 12, 2020

Dear Task Force Members,

We are writing on behalf of USA Softball NH, representing thousands of softball players and families throughout New Hampshire. Last week we communicated that we would follow up on our letter with more specific details regarding the safe return to play for USA Softball players in New Hampshire.

As promised, we are submitting this proposal for consideration as you sort through a framework for re-opening our state's economy. We continue to maintain that our first priority is abiding by state public health officials' guidance in order to protect our players, coaches, and families. As the task force and public health officials decide next steps, we hope this proposal can serve as a template for getting back youth sports, especially those most conducive to social distancing, like softball. We are very open to feedback, questions and changes, and welcome the opportunity to discuss further.

We don't envy the difficult decisions ahead of you, but we deeply appreciate your effort and consideration.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our group's point of contact, Liz Purdy (President of New Hampshire Lightning Softball Club) at 603-731-2200 or lizpurdy@gmail.com.

Thank you,

USA Softball of New Hampshire
Dan Boyce, Commissioner
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Safe Return to Play Proposal

Phase 1: Practice Protocols

We propose returning our teams to practice by June 1st. In order to ensure the safety of our players, we propose the following:

- 1a. We will adhere to The Governor’s Economic Re-Opening Task Force recommended protocols for safeguarding all New Hampshire businesses and individuals during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.
- 1b. Each team will designate a “team health manager”, whose role is to ensure that all protocols laid out in this document are adhered to, in compliance with CDC and state public health guidelines.
- 1c. Hand washing stations and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be made readily available, and sanitizing prior to practice will be required.
- 1d. Player equipment bags should be brought by the player and not handled by anyone except the player. No sharing of equipment will be permitted.
- 1e. Teams shall split into groups and practices designed to adhere to proper social distancing with players at least 6 ft. apart, with never more than 10 people in one area of the park. (See Appendix A for diagram of a softball field. The spacing lends itself well to comply with social distancing guidelines.)
- 1f. All practices should be held outdoors.
- 1g. Parents shall remain in their cars at all times and arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to the designated practice time. They will depart immediately after the player completes their practice.
- 1h. Any equipment used, such as balls or tees will be sanitized between each use.
- 1i. In rare situations where social distancing cannot be accomplished, face coverings will be worn, if required by health safety regulations.



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Phase 2: Tournament/Game Play

We propose returning our teams to game play by June 19th. In order to ensure the safety of our players, we propose the following:

We will adhere to The Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force recommended protocols for safeguarding all New Hampshire businesses and individuals during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

USA Softball of New Hampshire has required all New Hampshire teams to play only within the state of New Hampshire. Any team registered with USA Softball in a state other than New Hampshire will not be permitted to play in New Hampshire.

General/Facilities Protections:

- 1a. Follow cleaning and disinfection guidance contained in this document and CDC's guidance at all times.
- 1b. We would provide COVID-19 training to tournament staff prior to the event, and require all coaches participating in play to also take the online training.
- 1c. We would provide training on cloth face coverings based on "CDC guidance for Use of Cloth Face Coverings" to coaches, if required.
- 1d. Hand washing stations and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be made readily available, and all participants (players, coaches, umpires) will be required to sanitize upon arriving at the field.
- 1e. A Safety Director will be assigned to each site to monitor and manage all the rules related to health safety at the park.
- 1f. All players and families will be instructed to maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others at all times while not playing and on the grounds.



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- 1g. Food sales will align with the Food Services phased schedule.
- 1h. Restrooms/Portable Toilets will operate at limited capacity to adhere to social distancing policies. These facilities will be frequently cleaned and disinfected, especially high-touch surfaces.
- 1i. Player equipment bags should be brought by the player and not handled by anyone except the player. Same is true for coaches and their team equipment.
- 1j. Individual players may bring food or drink for themselves, but no tailgating, or team meals will be permitted. No communal water coolers will be permitted.
- 1k. Tournament merchandise could be available through an online store, so items can be pre-ordered and picked up without needing to shop in an on-site retail space. Online ordering and pickup can also be available on-site, but no additional merchandise should be sold on-site.
- 1l. Signage must be prominently posted throughout the venue to ask players/family about any COVID-19 symptoms (see Universal Guidance) OR close contact with a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the prior 14 days. If a person answers yes to any of these questions, they should be asked to leave immediately.

Distancing Measures:

- 2a. Those on the field will be limited to only coaches and uniformed players playing that day in a game happening. Fan attendance will be limited to household members of the players on the team.
- 2b. Parents/guardians should be socially distanced and restricted to the areas from the dugouts, down the baselines and around the outfield. No one will be permitted behind the backstops other than one parent volunteer to keep score. Bleachers will be blocked off and restricted from use.



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2c. Once a team has completed play they will need to leave the park. There will be no lingering to watch or scout other teams.

2d. No pop-up tents larger than 10x10 will be permitted as that encourages gathering too close together. Only household family members and their own player may share a tent. No team tents will be allowed. Individual chair umbrellas can be allowed.

2e. For tournaments in Phase 2, games will be spaced an appropriate time apart from one another. Teams can be brought into the park in blocks, so teams to come, play and leave before the next block of teams come to the park. It also allows time for proper sanitation of dugouts, fences and restroom facilities. It also limits the number of people in the park at one time.

Sanitizing:

3a. Absolutely no seeds, gum or smokeless tobacco will be permitted in dugouts or at the fields. No spitting of any kind will be permitted.

3b. Fresh game balls will be used for each game. Balls will be sanitized in between every half inning. Out-of-play balls will be sanitized before coming back into play.

3c. Dugouts will be sanitized after each game.

Game Play Adaptation:

4a. No pre or post game team huddles will be permitted. Coaches will give instruction to players in accordance with proper social distancing guidelines when possible.

4b. All other players must be socially distanced while outside the dugout and wearing face protection inside the dugout. Each team will designate one to two parents to monitor and control players outside the dugouts.



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4c. Circle visits by the catcher or manager only will be permitted and all must remain socially distanced.

4d. No sharing of equipment will be permitted.

4e. Players in close proximity to other players while on the field of play may be required to wear face protection.

4f. All umpires will be required to wear face masks.

4g. Each team will have access to the playing field 15 minutes prior to the start of the game to warm up. Where possible, designated warm up spaces off the field will be assigned by the on-site manager. Warm-ups will be designed to adhere to proper social distancing.



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Appendix A.

