

2021 KSHSAA SOFTBALL CONSIDERATIONS

Revised 3/23/2021

With support of the NFHS, the KSHSAA Sports Medicine Committee and the KSHSAA Executive Board, we offer this document as guidance to the member schools of the KSHSAA to consider for the 2021 softball season. The considerations outlined are intended to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging physical distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel, and allowing for appropriate and reasonable protective equipment. The KSHSAA believes these reasonable accommodations will help with risk mitigation for the upcoming softball season.

These protocols should be implemented along with other considerations, including but not limited to KSHSAA general mitigation protocols detailed in [Considerations for All Activities](#).

For as long as group size restrictions and social distancing are in place, the following best practices are recommended on activity specific basis.

Face Coverings:

All participants (including but not limited to athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, support staff and all others attending/participating in school activities) shall wear a face covering in the manner it is intended to be worn (for purpose of COVID-19 risk mitigation) while at the event venue and for duration of the event. The only exception is provided for athletes during the time they are competing and for officials during active play. Participants and/or officials may choose to wear a mask during active play unless it poses a safety risk.

(New 3/23/21): *KSHSAA Executive Board interpretation (March 23, 2021): Any participant (including but not limited to athletes, coaches, officials, spectators, support staff and all others attending/participating in school activities) **outdoors, who is able to maintain a minimum of six feet of social distancing** would not be required to wear a face covering. Adherence to a more restrictive local health authority or school district policy is supported and expected.*

Competition Scheduling Considerations:

- Multi-team, multi-community events are discouraged.
- Consider having game nights where only two teams are involved; avoid tournaments.
- Schedule teams in the same geographic area.
- Postseason modifications will be made as conditions allow.

Equipment/Facility Considerations:

- Be mindful of dugout capacity. Extend the dugouts to allow for more distancing; extension must be out of the field of play. Social distance while in the dugout as much as possible. Consider keeping equipment outside the dugout to allow for more space inside.
- Sharing equipment is prevalent in softball (helmets, catcher's gear, bats, balls). Clean equipment frequently. To minimize sharing of equipment, offensive helmets need not match.

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- Per guidance from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), plastic shields covering the entire face (**unless integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet and clear without the presence of any tint**) shall not be allowed during contests. During practice, their use increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield and to teammates.
- Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow cloth facial coverings.
- Personnel in the dugout should be limited to those essential to the game.

Practice Considerations:

- Maximize distance and limit groups in the same area.

Contest Warm-Up Considerations:

- Traditional infield may be taken.

Competition Considerations:

- Pregame conference should be limited to the head coach and umpires. Each shall wear a face covering and maintain 6 feet distance after exchanging lineups.
- Substitutions: The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.
- Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from the umpire.
- Base coaches must stay 6 feet from a runner at all times after suspension of play.
- No gathering at the pitcher's circle after put-outs.
- Players should not leave the dugout to congratulate scoring.

Athlete Considerations:

- Face coverings must be worn in the dugout.
- Perform daily health screenings.

Coach Considerations:

- Coaches should wear face coverings during practice and competitions.
- Players and team personnel on the team bench will practice social distancing and wear face coverings.
- Consider temperature checks before each practice for all coaches.
- Plan your practices to maintain social distancing guidelines whenever possible.
- Have a plan to mitigate the exposure potentials to give your athletes a chance to compete.
- Make sure equipment is sanitized before and after each practice.
- Use hand sanitizer frequently.

Umpire Considerations:

- Wear masks before the start of play and while entering/exiting field; may be worn during play.
- If conference is needed at any time, masks must be worn.
- Positions outlined in the umpire's manual will be used.
- If umpires must enter the field through the dugout, the dugout should be empty with no players/coaches/team personnel.

Transportation Considerations:

- Consider doing temperature checks before traveling to destinations.
- Follow the guidelines and protocols of the school district.

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- Face coverings be worn by all individuals. Mitigating the spread is important with the longer time together on a bus or in a van.
- Reduce traveling groups to essential personnel only (competitors, coaches, medical).

End of Game Considerations:

- In lieu of handshakes, please develop and utilize an appropriate sign of respect and sportsmanship that does not include handshake or other physical contact; suggestions include head nod, chest thump, salute, etc.