



VWSSL RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES



The following Return to Play guidelines below are based on an example of allowable gatherings of 25 people. They have been adapted to suit our individual levels of government requirements.

Please note these are guidelines and do not guarantee or claim to guarantee they will stop the spread of Covid-19 during a slo-pitch game.

- There will be a maximum 12 people allowed per/team including the scorekeeper.
- If a scorekeeper is used, then they must be included in the 12 allowable people per/team.
- Individual use of softball bats is recommend, but not required. If bats are to be shared, they must be wiped down with disinfecting cloth or sprayer prior to being used by another person. Disinfecting supplies to be supplied by team.
- When teams arrive at their game, there is to be no form of pregame warm up with teammates. Please do your warmups on your own
- It is the coaches and players responsibility to insure all current social distancing restrictions are adhered to.
- When on offense, please use the dugout only when necessary. Allow the on-deck batter and the batter the appropriate distance to get on to the field of play
- While on offense and waiting for your turn at bat, use the out of play boundary or the fence to stand, insure you are standing at least 2 meters away from your closest teammate.

Umpire Requirements and Procedures

- When the game is played with a sanctioned umpire, the umpire is responsible to try and ensure the rules of a Social Distance Ball Game is adhered to
- The umpire will give one warning per team if the guidelines are broken. If it continues to be an issue, the umpire will call game. Please review rules/guidelines during the plate conference
- The umpire will award the game to the appropriate team. If both teams are guilty of infractions, they will report to the league and the league can decide the outcome.
- The umpire accepts no responsibilities for the spread of COVID-19 and is only there to apply rules of a Social Distance Ball Game and the regular rules of the game of slo-pitch
- If the participants refuse to accept this the umpire has been informed to leave the playing area immediately
- Upon the umpire arriving at the field, he/she is to determine which team is responsible for diamond setup. At which time this is decided, the umpire is responsible to ensure the diamond area is clear of people to allow the responsible team time for setup.
- The umpire's area for the plate conference is home plate. Before calling for the plate conference he is to make a mark approximately 2 meters to right and another mark 2 meters to his left. This is where both coaches are required to stand during the plate conference. One player/coach per team
- The umpire then reminds the coaches of the unique situation we are in and asks them to insure they remind and help him/her enforce the rules of social distancing.
- The umpire will go over where they will be standing to call balls and strikes. "Please note during social distancing slo-pitch games, strike mat will be used."
- Umpires will then make a mark as to where the back catcher is to stand and show both coaches and to also show the back catchers when they arrive to play defense. Please ensure the mark or line is 2 meters back of the home plate.
- A 30-minute period has been scheduled between games. In the case where 2 new teams are waiting to play, and once this is noticed between or during a break in the current game, the umpire will call both coaches over from both the waiting teams one at a time. The umpire will go over what is required of them and where he/she wants their team to stand while waiting for the current game to end.
- When/if the game is self-umpired it will be the opposing coach's responsibilities to insure all social distancing, rules are enforced

Coaches Responsibilities

Coaches, as in the regular rules of slo-pitch, you are responsible for your players. There are various rules in the rulebook that hold both the player and the coach responsible for the player's actions. As a coach you need to ensure the guidelines put forth by NSA Canada and your league are adhered to.

- Coaches to ensure that all players have completed COVID-19 self-assessment before playing their game. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Captains MUST complete games roster sheet located in equipment box. League is required to track and maintain records of who has played for a 1-month period.
- Home team is responsible for diamond setup, please ensure the umpire has cleared the diamond before you start to setup or is 2 meters away. If self-umpired, then insure to ask the other coach to clear the field if needed.
- It is also the coach's responsibility to ensure their dugout contains both hand sanitizer and alcohol based sanitary wipes. As the coach, either bring these items yourself or designate a different teammate.
- Please remind your players to insure they follow all current social distancing guidelines put forth in your area by the various levels of government.

Players Responsibilities

Players, as in the regular rules of slo-pitch, you are responsible for your actions. There are various rules in the rulebook that hold you, the player responsible for your actions. As a player you need to ensure the guidelines put forth by NSA Canada and your league are adhered to.

- Each player shall complete a COVID-19 self-assessment before playing their game. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- No personal ball bags, or equipment allowed in the players bench area. Once you arrive at the game and your dugout side is determined, pick a spot along the fence or out of the play line, etc. and then put your personal equipment in this area. Please make sure all your teammates respect the rules of social distancing when picking their own areas to store equipment.
- Please remind your fellow players to insure they follow all current social distancing guidelines put forth in your area by the various levels of government.

Rules of the Social Distance Slopitch Game

- Game balls are to be provided as per your regular league rules. The umpire is responsible for the game balls and is to receive them before the game starts. It is the umpire's responsibility to ensure the game balls are wiped with an alcohol based cleaner before the game starts and in between innings when possible
- The wearing of mask or gloves is not mandatory but is allowed, this includes the pitcher.
- There is to be no unnecessary use of the game balls, ie infield warmups, throw arounds after outs, etc.
- When the inning is over the game ball is to be left at the pitcher's mound and the umpire will retrieve and clean for the start of a new inning

- Batting order will be as follows:

- Visiting team bats 1st inning
 - Home team bats 1st and 2nd inning
 - Visiting team bats 2nd and 3rd inning
 - Home team bats 3rd and 4th inning
 - Visiting team bats 4th and 5th inning
 - Home team bats 5th and 6th innings
 - Visiting team bats 6th and 7th inning
 - Home team bats 7th inning if necessary
- For 9 inning game (Monday night League), same process with the following change:
- Home team bats 7th and 8th innings
 - Visiting team bats 8th and 9th inning
 - Home team bats 9th inning if necessary
- Umpire is to enforce time limit as normal. If time is up during visitors batting the umpire calls last inning as normal
- 7 inning game 1 hour before umpire calls lasting during visitors batting.
 - 9 inning game 1 hour and 40 minutes calls lasting inning during visitors batting.
- Only batter runner, on deck batter and any base runners are allowed on the playing field while on offense. There will be no base coaches allowed on the diamond during offense.
- The batter runner, when hitting the ball, is to drop the softball bat on the way to first base and the on-deck batter is to pick it up by the barrel and place it in the dugout. In case of an out the batter/runner is to retrieve their own softball bat

- General playing rules apply for a social distance ball game when leaving the field or entering the field of play. Please ensure all social distance rules are adhered to
- There is to be no hand slapping or physical contact during the game to congratulate anyone for good plays, etc.
- Zero warm up allowed on the infield, this includes the pitcher.
- Once game is completed the umpire is to call time or end of game
- There is to be no form of gathering for 3 cheers or any other physical celebration contact with your team or the opposing team following the game.
- If in the case 2 other teams are waiting to play, coaches and players please insure you exit the area in a safe and timely manner and ensure all social distancing guidelines are followed.
- remove any masks, wipes or personal items that belong to your team and dispose of them in the trash.
- All standard NSA Canada or League rules apply except for the above exceptions.

