

April 2021 Oxford Softball Association Return to Play framework for Teams and the Oxford League

This guidance has been taken from the BaseballSoftballUK March 2021 Return to Play Guidance, which in turn has been approved by Sport England. This document was written on 9 April 2021, and represents the rules and government advice in place at the time. This is subject to change.

See the BSUK Return to Play Framework for full details:

<https://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/document/return-to-play-framework>

Note that, by agreeing to play, you must agree to abide by the above framework. The text below represents only a summary of that framework: in places, made more specific for the OSA context.

This guidance is aimed at everyone involved, not just players, but coaches and spectators, umpires etc. PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT before turning up to play. Teams (captains) also have some responsibilities.

Introductory notes

- As from 29 March, organised outdoor sport is now permitted, without restrictions on numbers of participants. Travel is also unrestricted.
- All activity must be formally organised and conducted under Government-approved guidance, that is to say, adhering to the protocols within BSUK's Return to Play Plan.
- Risk assessments needed¹:
 - Droplet (airborne) threat (social distancing)
 - Fomite (surface contact) threat (equipment)
 - Population (both of the above, plus controlled attendance)

Before play

Personal player responsibilities

- Check for symptoms of Covid-19
If you are symptomatic and/or living in a household with a possible infection, you must self-isolate (current guidance is 10 days, subject to change)
- Complete the attendance register to support NHS contact tracing
- Shower and change at home
- Check advice on toilet facilities etc at the venue
- Limit the time spent congregating at the venue before activity begins
 - (There will be no changing facilities)
- Bring your own hand sanitiser where possible. Use it and wash your hands regularly
- Sanitise hands before handling balls and equipment and play begins
- Make appropriate arrangements to avoid sharing equipment
- Players should bring individual drinks containers and refrain from sharing drinks with other players.

¹ These will be carried out by OSA Executive Committee

Organisers (league and teams)

The OSA Exec must

- Conduct and agree the recommended Risk Assessments
- Appoint a Covid-19 Officer
- Provide an attendance register before each session/event to collect contact information for all Participants, including full name, telephone number and email address
 - Keep for such information for a minimum of 21 days.
 - [OSA will delete such information within 35 days]
- On the day of an event (match, training etc.), collect a Participant Attendance Register.
- Provide clear advice regarding toilet facilities at venue(s)
- Make it clear that spectators are only permitted if looking after children or vulnerable adults (and must socially distance)

Teams must

- Appoint a Covid-19 Officer (see below)
- Bring hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes or spray to disinfect equipment
- Provide bin bags for rubbish

Covid-19 Officers

Each team must have a Covid-19 Officer, and team members must be aware of the identity of this person. There must also be a **League Covid-19 Officer**, whose name will be on the League website.

Each activity centred around a softball pitch must involve at least one Covid-19 Officer whose responsibility it is that all present are aware of the special practices regarding social distancing, enhanced hygiene (participants and equipment) and controlled attendance.

Covid-19 Officers must be aware of guidance updates from BSUK.

Prior to each activity, a **pre-event briefing** on personal safety and risk mitigation measures must be carried out by a Covid-19 Officer. At each activity, it may be the responsibility of the Covid-19 Officer to turn away unregistered participants and spectators.

During play

No rule changes have been deemed to be necessary. (We now have more understanding of how Covid is spread, and tag plays are not seen to be problematic, unless prolonged close contact is made, and the danger largely comes from breath, not hands or equipment.)

- Captains: in home games, you must bring two sets of game balls (11" and 12")
- Captains: you must nominate a player to clean the balls after warm up and prior to each defensive half inning (before you go out to field)
- Except when you are on the field and the ball is in play, adhere to the 2m rule of social distancing
- Try to keep to the 2m rule during play, but brief moments of closer proximity are not thought of as problematic
- Keep face-to-face interactions to an absolute minimum
- Do not share helmets or catchers' masks
- If bats are shared, the use of batting gloves is encouraged, and the handles must be cleaned between users
- Umpires must not share indicators, counters or other equipment

- If a player fails to reach base while batting, they must pick up their own bat (by the handle) upon leaving the field
- If a player gets on base while batting, the on-deck batter must remove the bat (by the barrel)
- Tag plays are permitted
- Balls used in tagged plays should be taken out of play and disinfected before being returned to play (this is the defensive/fielding team's responsibility)
- Umpires should not handle balls
- Catcher must be positioned a minimum of 1m behind the batter
- The umpire must be positioned a minimum of 1m behind the catcher
 - (If the umpire feels s/he cannot call balls and strikes effectively from this position, s/he may choose to call balls and strikes from behind the pitcher)

Before/after/during

- Must follow a 'no touch rule', refraining from high fives, hand-shaking and all other physical contact with all Participants including teammates, opposing players, umpires, spectators, etc.
- Chewing gum, tobacco or seeds, spitting into gloves/mitts, licking fingers, smoking or vaping are not permitted
- Cheering, shouting, loud celebrations, calling out, in-person award ceremonies, etc. are not permitted
- No more than two teams are permitted on any one field/activity space/court at the same time
- Temporary fields/activity spaces/courts should not be created in close proximity to one another to make social distancing difficult between teams
- If three or more teams use the same venue for a game or training, teams not actively competing against each other should not interact
- Schedules should minimise the need for teams to change fields/activity spaces/courts wherever possible
- Game and training times should be staggered where possible to avoid congestion in public spaces such as car parks
- Participants must not congregate in groups or exchange items following a game or training session and must adhere to 2-metre social distancing while departing a venue
- Anyone who tests positive for Covid-19 within a week of an OSA event must inform their Covid-19 Officer, who must pass this on to the OSA Covid-19 Officer

Covid-19 outbreaks

Should anyone test positive for Covid-19 after attending an OSA event, OSA – and specifically the League Covid-19 Officer being the controller of the registration data for an event attended by that softball player – may have a legal duty to disclose names and personal contact details to a relevant legitimate public health authority. OSA will ensure the request from that authority is genuine and, if requested, share the data securely, with contact tracers. In all cases, personal data collected should be kept by OSA for at least 21 days and at most 35 days.