



Howard County Youth Program – Softball Return to Play Plan



This plan has been created in three sections: **Practice Guidelines, Facilities Guidelines, and Game Guidelines.** The Facilities Guidelines pertain specifically to the management and utilization of Kiwanis Wallas Park for softball practices and games. The plan was constructed utilizing the Field Rental Guidelines provide by Howard County Recreation and Parks as well as plans collected from across the country who have safely returned to play.

Travel Softball is required to conform to National Rules set by USSSA, USA, or WFC. All of the Softball Guidelines are designed to conform to both National and HCRP required guidelines for COVID-19. The Game Guidelines for Travel Softball are designed to both protect the players, coaches and spectators. The Softball guidelines are similar to the guidelines approved by HCRP to hold USSSA events at Cedar Lane Park.

In order to ensure the health and safety of EVERYONE, we need the cooperation of all players, families, coaches, and volunteers. We can put all of the guidelines and rules in place to keep everyone safe, but it is the responsibility of everyone to follow these guidelines.

Practice Guidelines

General Protocol

- Prior to the first practice, coaches are required to have communicated to families and players ALL rules and guidelines that must be agreed and adhered to.
- Players, participants, administrators and coaches, please check your temperature prior to leaving for scheduled practice/game/class/program in or on a HCRP field/indoor facility. If your temperature is 100.3 degrees or higher, you are not permitted to participate in an activity in or on a HCRP field/indoor facility for a minimum of 14 days. You may, however, return sooner if you have a Doctor's note for return to play.
- DO NOT arrive at the park/fields more than 15 minutes prior to the start of practice time.
- Spectators may not enter the field area and must maintain an appropriate social distance of 6ft or more from other spectators and players.
- Players must have ALL of their own equipment and may not share ANY equipment (including bats).
- Players should arrive at practice with their own hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes in their equipment bag.
- Coaches should limit touching any player or helping them with equipment. If a player is in need of assistance, a player's parent should provide the assistance if possible.



Howard County Youth Program – Softball Return to Play Plan



Kiwanis Wallas Park Facilities Guidelines

General Protocol

- Proper social distancing will always be stressed and reviewed by coaches for themselves and their players.
- Numbers from 1-12 (younger age groups) or 1-15 (older age groups) will be placed on fencing/ground down the 1st and 3rd baselines of all fields at 6ft intervals.
- Each player will be assigned a number prior to the practice and they shall hang their bag below that number.
- Any parent/family member remaining at a practice field during practice must follow social distancing guidelines of 6ft from other non-family members and bring their own chair or blanket as bleachers will be closed.

Batting Cages

- The pavilion and Field 4 batting cages will have numbers on the fences adjacent to each batting cage or markings on the ground as to the flow and loading of each batting cage.
- The Field 8 batting cage will have numbers on the fence as to the flow and loading of each batting cage.

Restrooms

- Both sets of restrooms will be maintained by HCYP for cleaning purposes.
- All restrooms will be cleaned on a regular basis.

Concession Stand

- When open, the concession stand shall operate with the following protocols:
 - Patrons shall maintain 6 ft. of separation while in line and when exiting the concession area
 - Patrons shall wear masks at all times
 - A one-way flow shall be established, with one window used for ordering and another window used for pickup



Howard County Youth Program – Softball Return to Play Plan



Game Guidelines

General Protocol

- Each individual player, coach, umpire, and spectator has a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that protects themselves and others from illness. This includes **ensuring that all participants are symptom and fever free per CDC guidelines PRIOR to arriving at the field.** Anyone who does not meet CDC guidelines, is not permitted to attend a game in any capacity.
- Managers of all participating teams have a responsibility to ensure that all players, coaches, and spectators follow all rules and best practices, in addition to all other rules surrounding sportsmanship and conduct.
- It is the responsibility of each team to provide needed supplies for the periodic sanitization of softballs referenced in these rules.
- Violations of rules may result in immediate ejection of the individual and/or team manager from the facility, forfeit, and/or disqualification from the remainder of the tournament where applicable.

Social Distancing and Other Safety Guidelines

- Players and families must maintain adequate social distancing at all times, both off and on the field of play, with the exception of game action that will naturally draw players within a closer proximity.
- Areas behind the backstop and extending down the baselines as far as needed to maintain a distance of 6 ft. between all players and coaches will be reserved and closed to spectators. Numbering will be provided that designates places for player equipment.
 - Player equipment shall be placed immediately below the designated numbered areas where available or at a distance of at least 6 ft. apart.

Game Specific Rules

- No equipment may be shared, including bats.
- Each team will provide their own softballs. The defensive team will use their softballs when on defense. When each team is on offense, balls used while on defense shall be sanitized.
- Prior to each game, umpires will visually inspect the balls provided by each team to ensure they meet requirements for that age group.