



North Port Area Little League

Return to Play Plan

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to formalize North Port Area Little League's (hereafter "NPALL") plan to resume the season that was postponed in March, due to the COVID19 pandemic. The League's goal is to have a 2 week practice schedule, followed by 4-5 weeks of games and a season ending tournament in July.

Incorporations: NPALL hereby incorporates and will strive to promote the Best Practices set forth on the official Little League Website and as stated below.

Social Distancing: All players, coaches, volunteers, independent contractors, and spectators should practice social distancing of six feet wherever possible from individuals not residing within their household, especially in common areas.

Facility, Fan, and Administrative Guidance

Spread Out Scheduling of Practices and Games:

- League administrators should schedule sufficient time between practices and games to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises before the next group enters.
- Players/families/spectators are instructed not to show up to fields more than 40 minutes before game time.
- Where possible, individuals should enter your complex through one point of entry and exit through another.
- Arrivals to the complex can be scheduled to help ensure a large number of individuals are not arriving at the same time.
- If there is a game or practice prior to your event, families and spectators are encouraged to stay in their vehicles or at recommended social distances until the start of their game play to prevent overcrowding of spectator spaces and walkways.

- On-field warm-up should be limited as much as is reasonably possible and no more than 30 minutes.
- Ensure that practices and games follow all local and state directives regarding the number of people allowed to gather in one place.

Limiting Spectator Attendance:

- All spectators should follow best social distancing practices — stay six feet away from individuals outside their household; wear a cloth face covering; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.
- Local Leagues may choose to minimize the exposure risk to spectators by limiting attendance to only essential volunteers and limited family members.
- Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible.
- Leagues are encouraged to utilize streaming opportunities to provide virtual spectating.
- A spectator with any of the following conditions should not attend a practice or game until evaluated by a medical provider and given clearance to do so:
 - Active COVID-19 infection
 - Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
 - Fever
 - Cough
- Those at [higher risk for severe disease](#) should consider consultation with their medical provider before attending a game and should ensure the strictest adherence to guidelines regarding face coverings, distancing, and handwashing. Such groups include:
 - Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immunocompromise, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease.
 - Those currently residing in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 - Those over 65

Public Restrooms:

- Communicate information on available facilities and policies to all parents prior to resuming or beginning season.
- Access to public restrooms should be limited if possible.

- A “one-in-one-out” policy, where only one individual is permitted within the restroom at one time, should be implemented to ensure adequate distancing in the confined restroom space.
- Prior to and after any league activity, restrooms should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Restrooms should be disinfected on a regular basis.
- Public water fountains or refillable water stations should not be used, and should be turned off to discourage use, if possible.

Concession Stands:

- No food or concession sales should be allowed at facilities.
- Families are encouraged to bring their own food/beverages.

Post Information to Promote Everyday Preventive Actions:

- Leagues should display posters and signs throughout the park to frequently remind visitors to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These messages may include information about:
 - Staying home if you are sick or do not feel well, and what to do if you’re sick or feel ill.
 - Using social distancing and maintaining at least six feet between individuals in all areas of the park.

On-Field Guidance

Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact necessary to play the game. This should include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc. Little League International suggests lining up outside the dugout and tipping caps to the opposing team as a sign of good sportsmanship after a game.

Players and families should vacate the field/facility as soon as is reasonably possible after the conclusion of their game to minimize unnecessary contact with players, coaches, and spectators from the next game, ideally within 15 minutes.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- All managers/coaches, volunteers, umpires, etc., are encouraged to wear PPE whenever applicable and possible, such as cloth face coverings and protective medical gloves.
- Players are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings when in close contact areas and in places where recommended social distancing is challenging or not feasible, such as in dugouts.
- Players should not wear protective medical gloves on the field during game play.

- Players, especially at younger divisions, are not required to wear a cloth face covering while on the field during game play.
- Players will be permitted to wear a cloth face covering on the field during game play, if physically able to do so, based on any directive of a medical provider or individual determination of the player/parent/guardian.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Dugouts:

- Managers/coaches and players should be assigned spots in the dugout or on the bleachers so that they are at least six feet apart and must be placed behind a fence.
- Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.
- Players and managers/coaches should wear a cloth face covering while in the dugout.

Player Equipment:

- No personal player bat bags/equipment bags should be allowed in the dugout. Player equipment should be spaced accordingly outside the dugout to prevent direct contact.
- Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, bat, and catcher's equipment.
- Measures should be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible
- Some critical equipment may not be able to be obtained by every individual. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment must be cleaned first and then disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and allowed sufficient time to dry before used by a new player. Increased attention should be paid to detailed cleaning of all equipment directly contacting the head and face (catcher's mask, helmets).
- Player's equipment (e.g. bags, helmets, bats, gloves, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use by a parent/guardian/caretaker, where applicable.
- Individuals disinfecting equipment are encouraged to use gloves while using disinfectants and follow the manufacturer's directions for use. All disinfectants should be stored properly, in a safe area, out of reach of children.

Spitting, Sunflower Seeds, Gum, etc.:

- Sunflower seeds, gum, etc., should not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.

- All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.

Game Operations

Pre-Game Plate Meetings:

- If possible, plate meetings should be eliminated.
- Social distancing of six feet between individuals should be implemented during all pre-game plate meetings between teams and umpires.
- Plate meetings should only consist of one manager or coach from each team, and game umpires.
- All participants should wear a cloth face covering.
- No players should ever be a part of plate meetings.

Equipment Inspection:

- Players should place their individual equipment in a well-spaced out manner for inspection. Umpires should avoid direct contact with equipment where possible but, when required, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol after the inspection of each individual piece of equipment.

Limit League/Game Volunteers:

- For each game, there should only be the required team managers/coaches, umpires, and one (1) league administrator (i.e. Safety Officer, player agent, etc.) in attendance.
- Practices should be limited to the managers/coaches and players.
- Scorekeeping should be done by team coaches or team parent/guardian via GameChanger©. Proper social distancing should be practiced.
- Press boxes should not be utilized unless there is ample room for social distancing to occur within them.

Field Preparation and Maintenance:

- Fields should be mowed, raked, and lined prior to teams and spectators arriving at the complex and after they depart. It is encouraged that volunteers already participating in the game (managers/coaches, umpires, and league administrator) perform these tasks to limit individuals at the site.
- It is recommended that any shared field preparation equipment be sprayed or wiped with cleaner and disinfectant before and after each use.

Umpire Placement:

- Umpires are permitted to be placed behind the pitcher's mound/circle to call balls and strikes. Umpires are encouraged to keep a safe distance from players as much as possible and wear protective gloves.
- If physically able, umpires are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings while umpiring.