

The continued health and safety of our players, coaches, spectators, directors, staff, umpires, vendors, and park personnel is extremely important to us.

With that said, the integrity of the game is important, too. The game on the field will be played as normal. The catcher will NOT be required to be 6 feet from the batter or home plate. Umpires calling balls and strikes should allow adequate distance behind the catcher, while still able to perform their duty. Players and coaches should practice physical distancing at all times. No in-close team huddle/meeting in the pitcher's circle or 1st/3rd base to discuss plays or situations. Obviously, physical distancing won't always apply to players making plays on the field. We can play and enjoy the game while maintaining social distancing. However, we need everyone's cooperation to make this happen.

Below are guidelines for most Alabama USSSA Fastpitch events. Please note that some of these guidelines may not be applicable at all facilities due to logistics. The Tournament Director may post additions, subtractions, or modifications.

Also note that these guidelines are subject to change at any time. City, local, state, and federal guidelines may supersede these guidelines.

#### GUIDELINES, PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- All event participants, spectators, and employees must adhere to the six-foot physical distancing guidelines while at the facility.
  
- Follow all local and state guidelines for facilities and events.
  
- Any person who is experiencing symptoms of sickness will be prohibited from attending the event/venue of play.
  
- It is highly recommended that all staff and independent contractors wear face coverings whenever applicable.
  
- Players, coaches, and spectators are not required to wear face coverings. However, it is recommended that face coverings be worn in close contact areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
  
- Face coverings are not mandatory for athletes, but allow players to wear face coverings and gloves if they choose, as long as the items do not compromise the safety of any and all participants in the game.
  
- After the exchange of any cash, checks, documents, etc., it is highly recommended that hands are sanitized.

- When using a tent, please restrict it to immediate family members only.
  
- When using walkways, walk to the right, single file, while performing social distancing.
  
- Directors, players, coaches, umpires and spectators must adhere to the guidelines from CDC, state and local authorities regarding potential state travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders, including return to state or county of residence.
  
- Keep social distancing between teams in effect beyond the field of play.
  
- Teams, players, and coaches should refrain from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, group prayers, etc.
  
- No Team Meetings before, during, or after the game.
  
- In dugouts, discontinue use of water coolers that are provided by tournaments, parks, or teams. Players should bring their own, personal cooler instead of using a team cooler. Players should plan on bringing an individual water bottle. No shared water or food coolers.
  
- Allow teams to spread players out; expand the dugout area when room permits and only if player safety will not be compromised. Expansion of the team dugouts should not be done into foul ball areas. Attempt to limit bench personnel to essential team personnel.
  
- Limit the number of players and coaches in the dugout to maintain social distancing. The balance of players and coaches should go to the bleachers or other seating areas away from spectators. Teams should provide shade coverings for their team if not available by facility.
  
- Parents should supply their athletes with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer for disinfecting shared playing equipment and cleaning hands between innings.
  
- Upon arriving at a dugout for the first time, teams are to disinfect hard surface areas (benches, bleacher seats, bat racks, etc.).
  
- Teams are to clean their dugout of all trash and other items after each game, and to wipe down (disinfect) hard surfaces such as benches, bleachers, bat racks, etc.

- Players' items should be lined up against a fence at least six feet apart.
  
- Players should use their own gloves, helmets, and bats as much as possible.
  
- Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while playing catch, changing drills so that players remain spaced out, no congregating of players while waiting to bat.
  
- When dugout physical distancing/spacing is not possible, bleachers located between the dugout and home plate should also be used to spread out players.
  
- Players should have designated spots to place their personal items.
  
- Coaches must designate an adult who is responsible for ensuring players are seated properly unless they are actively participating in the games.
  
- Players must bring their own water/beverage to consume before, during, and after warm up and games.
  
- Players must bring their own snacks to consume before, during, and after warm up and games.
  
- No shared/communal snacks.
  
- The managers' pre-game meeting at home plate should be limited to one coach from each team plus the umpires. No players at pre-game plate meeting.
  
- Spectator attendance may be limited depending on city, local, or state social gathering guidelines and limited to household members of the players on the team.
  
- Spectators must not enter the player areas (on the field of play or bench area.)
  
- If bleachers are used for players and coaches, spectators should view the game from their respective 1st base or 3rd base fence line from the end of the dugout to the outfield.
  
- Spectators may not sit or stand in high traffic areas (e.g., behind the backstops).

- Fans may have to bring their own chairs or stand. Fans should keep six feet of social distancing between different household units.
  
- Fans and players must leave the playing area and return to their cars immediately after their game(s) end. No sticking around to watch other teams play.
  
- In the event of inclement weather--including but not limited to rain, lightning delays, etc.--fans, coaches, and players cannot congregate under tents, overhangs, or other covered structures in the near proximity of other gatherings or heavy foot traffic. Social and mass gathering guidelines must be maintained at all times.
  
- Teams to play next should be provided designated areas for player warm-ups that provide for necessary social distancing.
  
- The team to play next must remain in their designated warm up area until the prior team has finished sanitizing and is completely out of the dugout.
  
- Fans for upcoming games must remain in their cars or away from the warm up/playing areas during player warm ups. They will be permitted to come to the field once their team enters the dugout area.
  
- At some facilities, concession stands may not be opened. Please plan accordingly.
  
- All players, coaches, staff, independent contractors and spectators should practice social distancing of 6 ft. wherever possible, especially in common areas. Of course, this won't always apply to players while engaging in the sports activity.
  
- Player equipment should be spaced accordingly to prevent close contact.
  
- The use of team shared equipment should be limited whenever possible and should be sanitized after each use.
  
- Please allow team to fully vacate the dugout before the next team enters.
  
- Team on defense should assign a person(s) to retrieve foul balls and return them to the person on defense in charge of sanitizing balls.

- Do not discard PPE face coverings or gloves on ground.
  
- Any person coming within an unsafe distance of an umpire or event director to aggressively argue or discuss a call may be subject to automatic ejection (game plus next game) or removal from premises.
  
- Directors have the right to adjust the playing formats and increasing the amount of time between games, to minimize overlap and traffic flow where needed.
  
- Restrooms must be cleaned and sanitized regularly. Physical distancing guidelines must be followed.
  
- No spitting or projectile nasal secretions. This includes, but not limited to, saliva, mucus, sunflower seeds and shells, gum or similar products.
  
- If eating shelled peanuts, do not discard shells on the ground.